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CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCES  
OF  
CHRISTIANITY.

BY  
DANIEL CAREY.



CINCINNATI:  
WALDEN AND STOWE.

NEW YORK: PHILLIPS & HUNT.

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## PREFACE.

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THE matter contained in the following chapters, having at first a somewhat different form, was designed to be read to a small group of doubting or unbelieving friends. When the purpose of seeking a larger audience, which should include these, was formed, changes were made in the way of adaptation; but as a few passages retain traces of the earlier purpose, and of the surroundings of the writer, this slight explanation is made to those whose attention may be called to this fact.

I will also explain a feature of the book which may appear objectionable. No references are made to the Bible by citing chapter and verse, nor to other writings by citing the chapter or page of the book.

Where citations of this kind are made,

while the passage so referred to may present itself clearly to the writer, it forms no part of the argument as it presents itself to the reader, because the passage, usually not entirely familiar, certainly will not in most cases be looked up. Accordingly, what I have desired to use at all I have quoted in full, at the risk of being tedious.

The number and length of the quotations from modern writers will be excused by those who observe that a part of the work undertaken was to show that facts made conspicuous by modern skeptical writers confirm the claim of Jesus to the Messiahship.

DANIEL CAREY.

ROCHELLE, ILL., Feb. 17, 1881.

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# Circumstantial Evidences

OF

## CHRISTIANITY.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A STATEMENT OF GENERAL FACTS.

**W**HAT view shall we take of the statements made by the New Testament writers in regard to Jesus? This involves the question of the supernatural origin of Christianity.

The existence of the statements involving the supernatural has been accounted for in various ways. In the language of Hume and Paine, the New Testament writers were liars. Later, and perhaps more careful, students of the character of Jesus and the New Testament writers have used more respectful language. Strauss regards the character of Jesus as largely mythical, or as being, to a large extent, a personification of certain religious ideas. Rénan

finds this view an insufficient explanation of known facts ; and, though he modifies the view of Strauss but little, he gives more prominence to what he believes to be credible in the Gospels, and says that at the head of the Christian movement there must have been a man of colossal proportions. But it is his view that, between the death of Jesus and the writing of the books of the New Testament, legends and traditions of the early Church came to be believed, which give to the New Testament its supernatural character.

From the title, "Circumstantial Evidences of Christianity," it is probably understood that an effort will be made to present facts which confirm the belief that the statements made by the New Testament writers in regard to Jesus are substantially true. The expression, substantially true, is used, because no effort will be made to show that the New Testament writers were strictly infallible, and incapable of any defect of memory, in the rehearsal of unimportant details ; but the effort will be to confirm the belief that the statements of what purport to be important facts—those which give to the life of Christ its supernatural character—are trustworthy.

The supernatural events in the life of Christ, as a believer views them, are not isolated events, having no rational or logical connection with the rest of the world's history. There was a long train of preceding events, intimately associated with the coming of Christ, leading up to it, and having an important bearing upon the credibility of the statements made in the New Testament in regard to the events of his life. There have been important and well-known results of the life of Christ, having a similar bearing on the credibility of those statements. If both these classes of facts, with others having a bearing on the case, are ignored, we shall perhaps arrive at the aphorism of Hume, "It is contrary to experience that a miracle should occur; it is not contrary to experience that men should lie," with the conclusion to which experience is here supposed to point; but in arriving at this we may miss the truth.

The statements concerning Christ are not statements of a series of flashes of lightning and peals of thunder from a cloudless sky. To use this somewhat worn illustration—the moisture-bearing wind, the sultry air, and the

gathering clouds which precede a shower, and the moist condition of the ground, the swollen streams and freshened fields seen after a shower, have been discovered in this case. These facts, which make the events of the life of Christ something quite different from isolated events, may be read from nature, from history, and from the state of things at the present time, as the meteorologist reads the facts in regard to the natural shower from his self-registering apparatus.

The consideration of certain general facts, which incline the mind to investigate the truth of Christianity, will constitute our introduction to the consideration of facts which have a more immediate bearing on the credibility of the New Testament account of Christ.

If I were thrown by shipwreck, destitute, upon an island which I fully believed to be uninhabited, and the granite peaks or barren sands appeared to confirm this belief, and if, while so situated, a sound were borne across the waste that seemed to be a human voice inviting me to shelter, food, and clothing, I should be prepared to pronounce the sound a delusion. But if we suppose the situation

so far changed that the island on which I had been thrown was green with thriving vegetation, that I saw in the sand upon the beach the prints of human feet, that I saw, a little inland, the hospitable smoke rising from some domestic fire, and that, while so situated, a sound were borne to me which seemed to be a human voice inviting me to shelter, food, and clothing, my surroundings would already have led me one step towards belief, and I should be eager to learn the truth. In approaching the question of the truth of Christianity, we have a right to that frame of mind which results from the fact that the footprints of the Creator are visible on every hand about us.

The idea of a God appears to be found existing in the mind as the idea of justice is found existing there, apparently innate; but the train of thought by which this idea is strengthened, if it previously existed, or by which it is gained if it did not previously exist, is perhaps nearly that of the following argument:

We may classify the various objects known to us, according to their resemblances, with

reference to the fact that they do or do not in their structure manifest thought. We shall then have in one class all unorganized matter; for though the theist does not consider inorganic matter destitute of arrangement, as the stage on which manifestations of a higher order shall appear, the want of organic structure leaves a mass of earth, or stone, or metal, without any manifestation of thought that can be readily discerned.

In the other class will be all objects of the organic world, from the most minute vegetable known to the gigantic trees of California, and from the mote whose organic structure can only be discerned when magnified several millions of diameters to the mammoth and the whale. But the class that has been indicated will contain more. It will contain organized objects, the plan of whose organization originated in the mind of man, from the toy that pleases the infant fancy for a moment and is consumed to the Crystal Palace, with all that artisan and artist can exhibit there; from the screw whose thread can only be discerned with the help of the microscope to the railroad, with its accompaniment of telegraphs and telephones.

Having made this classification, the fact in relation to it which most fully enlists our attention is the completeness of the resemblances on which the classification is made. Very many of the thoughts manifesting themselves in objects of art have their counterpart in the thoughts manifesting themselves in objects of nature. Mention of a few will recall the many with which we are familiar. However rapidly a man's hand may move, when busy, his eye continually attends it. At each moment the axis of his eyeball is so directed as to receive light from the point requiring his attention. These movements are effected by muscles attached at the back part of the bony socket of the eye and extending forward to various parts of the eyeball. Among these is one so arranged as to cause an inward and downward movement of the eye when that movement is required. There was not room for this muscle to extend in the direction in which the motion was to be made, and have space to contract and expand, without interfering with other organs. A muscle, however, extending in the same direction as the other muscles attached at the back part of the socket,

and neatly packed with them, could, and in reality does, perform this work, by having its tendon pass through a loop and turn at right-angles to the direction in which the muscle extends. There is a suggestive similarity between this arrangement and the various arrangements made with rope and pulley; as when a farmer passes a rope around pulleys fixed at two well-selected points, and places his hay where he wishes to have it, while his horse moves horizontally along the ground.

The brain is protected by a well-made box of hard and tough material; the fluids of the eye, by a firm and tough material. Hard materials, also, are found wherever supports and levers are needed, interspersed with elastic yielding material, where this is needed, at the joints. These are arrangements like those which suggest themselves to the mind of man when circumstances require them. The dark inner coating of the eye prevents the reflection of stray rays of light which would confuse the image; so does the dark inner surface of a telescope. The crystalline lens refracts rays of light to the extent required; so do the lenses of a telescope.



These manifestations of thought are facts, as much so as the materials in which the thoughts are wrought. They are effects also. The cause of these manifestations of thought in one case is the mind of man, a personal being. The effects are similar. Are the causes similar? Where causes are sought in other cases, like effects are traced to like causes. The cause of a drift of sand and gravel found in the deserted bed of a river is like the cause of a drift of snow. Each is a deposit from a fluid whose motion has been checked by some obstruction, though the fluids are not the same. The existence of such drifts under the lee of obstructions which the current could not remove, lying along the course of what is believed to be the deserted bed of a river, would be received as evidence that causes analogous to those which produce the snow-drift were once active there.

Glaciers, now existing on high mountains and in polar latitudes, as their lower borders advance in Winter to a lower level, and recede in Summer under the increased heat, leave certain effects or traces, which have been carefully studied. The melting of the lower por-

tion of the glacier leaves a dreary waste of stones released from the ice in which they had been imbedded. The advance of the glacier each Winter presses these scattered stones forward and downward toward the lower limit of this advancing and receding movement. In this way an accumulation, or wall, of these stones is formed at the lower limit of the glacier. Somewhat similar accumulations form at the sides of the lower portion of the glacier. Parallel scratches, or marks, are made in the bed rock of the bottom and sides of the valley in which the glacier is working. These are made by fragments of stone imbedded in the moving ice at the surface which moves over the rock. The parallel marks resemble those made by the teeth of a large stiff harrow drawn across a smooth field. Effects in every respect resembling these, whatever may have been the cause, have been found in nearly all the explored parts of the world, even in regions which now have tropical climates. It is difficult to understand how the whole world could have been so cold as to have permitted the general action of glaciers; but, against all difficulties, geologists have arrived at a belief

in a glacial period during which glaciers existed in nearly all parts of the world. Such is the force of similar effects in leading men to believe in similar causes. The sole ground of belief in a glacial period is the resemblance of certain effects found in various parts of the world to the effects now being produced by glaciers.

The thoughts manifested in nature did not originate in the human mind; but the complete resemblance between these thoughts and those which did originate there intimates an origin in something that works as the human mind works, and is capable of originating thoughts as the human mind is. Analogy is not proof. We do not say that, because very many manifestations of thought originated with personal beings, no thought could manifest itself in any other way; but a long and uniform experience in tracing like effects to like causes leads us to think this theory greatly more probable than any other.

What we know of the origin of certain organized structures is not more suggestive than what we know of the order in which the various steps in their construction progressed.

In every instance the ideal preceded the real. The house was planned before it was built. A farmer, whose hay and grain have been spoiling in the storms, may for years have been carrying about in his mind a barn, thoroughly finished and well painted from basement to cupola. Perhaps in future it will be so embodied in solid materials that he may use it, and other people may see it. The point important to our illustration is not the length of time an ideal structure may be carried in the mind, but the fact that in the construction of whatever manifests thought the conception in the mind precedes the arranging of the materials in which the thought shall at last be manifested.

There is much discussion as to the priority of matter or mind, and as to the eternity of God's existence, into which we need not enter while merely inquiring whether there are intimations in nature of God's existence. The intimation we receive from the consideration just stated is that a conception of the plans, simple and complex, which we see manifested in the organized structures about us, existed in something analogous to the human mind, when

materials, which before existed as unorganized matter only, began to move and arrange themselves so as to form the structures which now manifest thought.

Our knowledge of the human mind and of its mode of existence is imperfect, and our conception of God and his mode of existence is doubtless still more imperfect; but we are conscious of our own thoughts, and know something of the working of the human mind. The intimation received from the complete resemblance between the machinery which has originated with men and that discovered in nature is, that the human mind, however it may exist, is the best type we have of that with which those thoughts originated which are manifested in organized nature, as those of the hand and the eye. To many minds it appears that the power which could originate the thoughts manifested in nature could originate the thoughts which pertain to a revelation; and that the power which could so modify the action of force and the properties of matter—so control the laws of nature—that where, before a certain period, only unorganized matter existed, portions of this matter began so to

arrange themselves as to form organized beings, could also so control the laws of nature as to produce all the signs of its superhuman origin that are claimed to have accompanied such a revelation.

The argument based on the thoughts manifested in the material world will be pursued, in connection with objections urged against it, after we have noted the fact that intimations we receive from the material world are seconded by an intimation from the structure of the human mind. There is a religious faculty, of which man alone of the animal world is possessed. In the exercise of this he forms religious conceptions, and performs religious acts. This faculty is accompanied by a moving force, which has impelled men in all ages and in all countries to the performance of religious acts, as the instinct of an animal impels it to those acts which are necessary to its existence. We here find tendrils of the mind, which stretch upward and clasp some God, real or imaginary, and cling to that Being with unyielding persistence. There seems to be implanted in human nature a reminder of God's existence, with an impulse towards his worship. If a

theory is recommended by its explaining known facts, then the theory that there is a God who designed men to be religious is recommended by its being a simple and sufficient explanation of the facts just mentioned in regard to the mind. This intimation of God's existence should be associated with those before mentioned. It should here be stated, also, that this intimation of God's existence is not derived from some special theory of the mind, but from such manifestations as may be studied without regard to theories.

The chief opposition to the doctrine of God's existence has taken the form of a rival theory, which considers nature sufficient for the production of all that exists, not excepting intelligent and moral beings.

I will state a few reasons for doubting the correctness of this theory :

1. It is built on the development hypothesis, or theory of evolution, which is not yet so established as to be a secure foundation for so important a superstructure. The development hypothesis accords with many facts, and it is received by many Christians; but when it is made the foundation of a theory so im-

portant, and yet so cheerless, as that which is here built on it, we incline to examine it more carefully. That the development hypothesis may be used to explain the course of nature, several points must be assumed; and around each of these assumed points there is a dark shading of doubt. Take as an example that part of this hypothesis which supposes men and monkeys to have descended by slightly diverging lines from the same species, a species which has long been extinct. Consider the very great number of animals of high organization that must have existed between that extinct species and man. As a help in forming a conception of that multitude, consider not only the great number of human beings that have existed, but the very slow progress that has been made, if any has been made, towards development into some higher species that is to follow man. History, sculpture, and painting give some idea of man during three thousand years past. Certain human remains are thought to belong to periods much earlier; and of these some skulls assigned to early periods are of a high order. During the period in which man has existed no such



radical change has taken place as would furnish the imagination a clew by which it might forecast, not the coming man, but the coming species, by whatever name it is to be called. We have no reason to suppose that the progress of development was more rapid in the past. As nature advances by moderate steps, and not by strides, the species which immediately preceded man must have possessed an organization nearly equal to that of man. That species probably existed several thousands of years, and numbered in its successive generations many millions of individuals, as millions of individuals have formed the successive generations of men. The period of this species of animals must have been preceded by that of another species but little inferior, which existed for thousands of years, and numbered its millions of individuals. And so the imagination, without minutely specifying, finds its way back to the species from which both men and monkeys have descended. If these millions of animals of high organization have existed, is it not probable that during the past seventy-five years of search some traces of their existence would have been discovered?

Frail animals, with no bony skeleton, left traces of their existence all along the ages of geology; tender plants left their impress on the rocks; the little rain-drop, falling by its own weight, and driven by the wind of some storm which preceded the human age, left its mark on the mud and sand since turned to stone; but these unnumbered millions of beings, possessed of organizations but little below that of man, died and left no trace of their existence that has yet been discovered, though such traces have been diligently sought.

While this dark shading of doubt lingers about the several assumed points of this hypothesis, its stability can not be considered entirely assured. As we step on to it, bearing the timbers of the dark structure to be raised above it, a tremulous movement under the foot sends through the mind a thought of possible moving of quicksands below. Perhaps there is in this foundation something that is not quite solid.

2. The theory that nature is sufficient ignores, or leaves unused, the suggestion furnished by those structures with whose origin we are acquainted. We know that thoughts

are continually originated by personal beings. We do not know that a single thought ever originated in any other way. Having been accustomed to ask ourselves, "How shall we reason but from what we know?" we must ever doubt the propriety of neglecting so plain a suggestion, while we also feel an incompleteness in a theory which purports to account for what is seen in nature, and yet suggests no origin for the thoughts that are manifested in it.

When we stand before the open door of a clock we readily trace its movements to the action of gravity on its weights and pendulum, and to the materials of which the clock is made. All these movements are reduced to force and matter. But what of the origin of the clock? Our thoughts turn to certain operatives who are making wheels and cords and weights, and who for years have been making wheels and cords and weights like those which existed before. Here we have an account of the clock into which we are looking. Still, our theory of clocks is not complete, and it will not be complete till it contains some thought of an inventor. We stand in the

presence of nature to watch its movements, as we stand before the open door of the clock. Its movements are reduced to force and matter. But what of the origin of those structures which manifest thought? We find that in the presence of vitality, whatever that may be, the laws of nature have power to reproduce those structures which existed before. Under the influence of instinct the bees and spiders of to-day trace out the same plans that were manifested in the combs and webs of antiquity. So under the influence of vitality the thoughts manifested in the structure of animals and plants are reproduced from generation to generation. The living egg of a turkey produces a turkey. The living egg of a hen produces a hen. The living acorn that drops from an oak produces an oak. Here we have an account of the animals and plants within our observation. Still our theory of animals and plants is not complete. We inquire concerning the beginning of this process of hereditary descent, and ask for some adequate source of the thought or plan which we find reproduced from generation to generation along one of these lines. We can not feel that our theory

is complete till it contains some thought of an inventor.

Those who are convinced of the soundness of the theory of evolution believe that along these lines of descent changing conditions have so modified the plans of organization that existed ages ago as to produce adaptations which did not then exist. The following questions are suggested for their consideration: "Can those adaptations which have manifested themselves under these changed conditions, and which were not seen in the plan as it existed ages ago, be considered intimations of God's existence?" "Were not these adaptations made by change of climate and change of other conditions, rather than by God?" "Does not the discovery of these modifications destroy the force of those intimations which were received from nature?"

Waiving for the present some doubt as to whether these radical changes have taken place, it will not be best to overlook these inquiries. To my mind the intimations of God's existence are neither destroyed nor diminished in force. If it is true that any line of hereditary descent has not only passed through many

individuals, but through several related species, then perhaps all we have discovered bearing on the question under consideration is, that the plan according to which this line of descent was at its beginning forecast contains more than it was once supposed to contain. An examination of an animal shows it to be adapted to the mode of life it is leading; but such examination will not assure us that we have seen all of the plan of the species of animals to which it belongs. The caterpillar has an arrangement of muscles and other organs adapting it to the life it is leading; and yet the plan which may be traced in the caterpillar is only part of a more complex plan—a single phase of a varying existence. There is as yet no hint of wings; but when wings appear, and an entire adaptation to a new mode of life is seen, we perceive that we had before discovered but part of the plan; we do not on that account say that no plan at all of this species of animals was forecast. The capability of taking this modification of its organization existed in some invisible way in the worm, and was a part of the plan of its being, as much as the arrangement of organs by

which it was enabled to pursue its career as a caterpillar.

If nature is proceeding in its course according to certain preconceived plans, there may be provision in those plans for modifications of the structure, which reappears from generation to generation along some line of hereditary descent. If modifications amounting to adaptations which did not exist before, and amounting to change of species, are facts, the indication here discovered is, not that the course of those reproductions is following no preconceived plan, but that part of the plan is a degree of flexibility permitting such modifications as will enable this line of descent to continue under changed conditions.

To a limited extent, men give to machines of their making this power of adaptation to changing conditions. I will illustrate this thought by means of machinery with which people in many neighborhoods are quite familiar. Some years ago windmills designed for pumping water were introduced. They were made after a simple but inflexible plan, which did not admit of any modification of form under the varying force of the wind. When the

wind blew moderately they did well. When the wind grew violent they were dashed to pieces. Relics may perhaps be found on some farms, which give evidence at once of the former existence of these mills and of the occasional occurrence of winds which did not permit their continued existence. So relics found in the rocks give evidence at once of the former existence of animals and plants, the plan of whose being did not enable them to continue down to the present time, and of the occurrence of those changes of climate and of other conditions which destroyed them. After the mills just referred to had run a short career, or perhaps overlapping the same period to some extent, other windmills appeared, capable of taking certain modifications of form; not the same in every case, but all taking such modifications as would enable them to pass uninjured through the occasional gales. We may suppose one who had been familiar with the earlier mills to have first seen a specimen of these when at a little distance from it, and just as a storm was coming on. Noticing that as the wind rises the mill takes a modification of its form, he says, "I believe the wind does



that." Continuing his observation, and noticing that as the wind increases the modification of form increases, he adds, "Yes, I see, the wind does it." And his conjecture is right. The wind does it. We will not suppose him to add, "I am persuaded that the changes in other features which differ from those of the earlier mills were also caused by the wind." Still less will he say, "In the light of what I now see it appears possible, if not altogether probable, that the wind, and other conditions necessary to the existence of windmills, made the entire thing, tower and all." His thoughts refuse to take that course. It is at once suggested to his mind that some inventor foresaw the occasional gales, and by some arrangement of machinery, which at the distance of this observer can not be seen, gave the mill the degree of flexibility it is seen to possess. If his curiosity is sufficient to send him up the tower he will see an arrangement of slides, pulleys, and chains by which the capability of taking these modifications is secured. He so learns the details; but his conviction that some provision for these changes had been made by an inventor was complete before.

I do not say that the observer of nature has no more excuse than the observer of windmills for placing an extravagant estimate on the influence of blind force; but the illustration may suggest a more rational theory. No arrangement of slides, pulleys, and chains can be discovered in the caterpillar; but the capability of taking another form exists in it in some invisible way as a part of the complex plan of its being. If it does not, the rays of the sun will be as likely to make wings somewhere else as on the back of the caterpillar. If it does, then the caterpillar appears to be in the condition of the windmill which received from its inventor the capability of taking a modified form. If the plan of organization which reappears from generation to generation along some line of hereditary descent is capable of receiving modifications, then we have here something more completely in the condition of the windmill, which received from its inventor permission to take a modified form when changing conditions require it—a permission that is embodied in slides, pulleys, and chains which remain unused until changing conditions call them into action. Whether the

plans of organization which reappear from generation to generation along the various lines of hereditary descent are capable of receiving modifications amounting to change of species or are not, we seek some source of the plans, some adequate cause of their existence.

It is said that matter may have existed and may have been in motion eternally; that an endless train of action and reaction, cause and effect, may have resulted in what we now see.

The casual collision of bodies, it is true, produces effects. Such collisions have been known to disorganize, but they have not been known to produce, organized structures. The results of ten thousand collisions, so far as we are able to see, would be fragments of unorganized matter. Assuming the eternity of matter and of motion, we shall have, in force, a source or cause of motion and of changes of form. We still look, as we did before, for a source of thoughts.

It doubtless appears to many that doubts and differences of opinion in regard to the nature of the human mind, and in regard to its powers, destroy the intimations of God's existence. It is assumed that the mind is the

brain, and that thoughts are secreted in the brain as the gastric juice is secreted in the stomach and bile in the liver.

Let us look at the theory that nature is sufficient for the production of all that exists, in the light of this assumption. The brain is a collection of matter very highly organized. It secretes and sends forth beautiful and complex combinations of thought, some of which we see manifesting themselves in machinery. In those machines known as the bodies of animals and men thoughts still more beautiful and more complex manifest themselves. Where is the collection of matter, more highly organized than the human brain, in which these transcendent thoughts were secreted? No such collection of organized matter is assumed in this theory. It is preferred to leave unused the suggestion furnished by those structures with whose origin we are acquainted.

It is said that the mind has no power to create; that it can only combine what existed before; that in machinery simple mechanical powers, as the inclined plane and lever, existed, and men have combined them to accomplish certain ends. Let this, then, be the

limit of the mind's power. One hundred years ago the agricultural machinery now in use did not exist. Within that time these combinations of simple mechanical powers have been caused by the mind of man. Ages ago organized bodies did not exist on the earth, there being neither animal nor plant in existence. We need a suggestion of something that has caused these combinations, in the same sense in which the other combinations have been caused by the mind of man.

Leaving unused the suggestion furnished by those structures with whose origin we are acquainted, and making no suggestion of an adequate source of the thoughts manifested in nature, gives to this theory an air of improbability.

3. In structures of human origin an unvarying order of precedence is observed, as has been mentioned. The ideal precedes the real. The house is planned before it is built. In accepting the theory that nature is sufficient, we must conceive this order of precedence reversed—that the house is built before the plan exists. According to this theory natural laws act entirely without regard to consequences—

without regard to the result in the end produced. That is, under these laws materials move and arrange themselves so as in the end to manifest wonderful adaptations, though no impulse towards the accomplishment of these ends has been received directly or indirectly from any intelligent being. At the end of this process beautiful and complex plans not only for the first manifest themselves, so that they can be recognized by an observer, but it is at the end of this process that they first exist, not having been previously conceived. The necessity of conceiving the order of precedence reversed gives to this theory an air of improbability; and the more we consider the complete resemblance between the thoughts manifested in nature and those manifested in art the more improbable this view of the origin of thoughts, or of adaptations, appears.

4. According to this theory, at each moment the state of things that exists is the effect of that state of things which immediately preceded it, and the cause of that which shall immediately follow it. Following the course supposed to have been pursued by nature, with a view to applying this theory, we meet at

various stages transitions in which the change is so great, and of such character, that we find in the preceding state of things no adequate explanation of what appears in that immediately following. I have mentioned the shading of doubt that lingers about several points in the development hypothesis; but there is a vast difference between the supposition that the plans of a Being capable of devising plans, and of superintending their execution, are unfolding in the course of nature, and the supposition that matter, receiving no impulse at first and no guidance afterward from designing intelligence, has under the influence of blind force passed through the changes which have resulted in a beautiful and widespread display of adaptations. It is this view of development we are now applying. From a world without man to a world including man there is a great stride. Not only is the advance in organization great, but there appear in man peculiarities of mind, especially the religious faculty, of which the slightest germ can not be found in lower animals. The suggestion of missing links helps us but little, when we consider the great probability that those links would

not now be missing if they had ever existed.

Going back along the course of nature, we reach a period in which neither animals nor plants existed. Between a world entirely without life and organization and a world including life and organization, however simple, there is a chasm at which nature seems to need the extended hand of some one able to help her across. If the view could be established that life and organization may result from unorganized matter, and a strong probability could be given to the idea that these simple organizations may develop into quadrupeds and men, the manifestations seen in the result of this process would still impress many minds, if not most minds, with the probability that some being capable of devising plans gave matter its tendency towards the accomplishment of this result; but the statement that unassisted nature is sufficient would be much more impressive if accompanied by a successful illustration.

Let a mass of matter, selected by those who expect animals or plants to appear in such circumstances, be melted, or so heated as



to insure the destruction of all germs of life, and placed while in this state in air previously so heated as to insure the destruction of any germs of life that may have existed in that. This mass of matter will then be in the condition of the earth when cooling from the melted state, surrounded by an atmosphere destitute of life. If in this condition animals or plants should appear on this mass of matter, or in it, the statement that unassisted nature is sufficient to produce all that exists would be more impressive. Materials suspected of a tendency to produce living beings of very simple organization have received treatment somewhat like this; and in such cases, so far as I have learned, organized structures, simple and complex, small and large, have failed to appear.

We are acquainted with many successful experiments in producing organized structures conducted in a somewhat different way. The house in which these chapters are written is a simple structure, and yet one requiring forethought. Some years ago the stones which now lie in its foundation began to move in some neighboring quarry, and con-

tinued to move till they reached this place. So the timber, boards, and shingles moved from some lumber-yard. Each portion of this material took its place in what is now a house. All this was in accordance with the wishes and plans, and in obedience to the wills, of certain personal beings. If, when there existed neither animals nor plants, unorganized matter began so to move and arrange itself as to produce them, our experience suggests that all this was probably in accordance with the wishes and plans, and in obedience to the will, of some personal Being; but especially, until unorganized matter is found to show some tendency towards not only producing organized structures, but endowing them with life and the power of reproduction, we must say that between a world entirely without life and organization and a world including life and organization, however simple, there is a chasm that seems impassable without the help of something more than blind force and unorganized matter.

In view of the difficulties in the way of receiving the only rival theory, it still appears proper to assert that there are in nature—

both in the material world and in the structure of the human mind—intimations of the existence of God, the Being from whom it is claimed a revelation has been received.

## CHAPTER II.

## A STATEMENT OF GENERAL FACTS—CONTINUED.

IF it were not for what appears to be a misapprehension in regard to the bearing on the truth of revelation of the theory that nature is sufficient for the production of all that exists, we should here pass immediately from this to another topic. But we wish first to notice what appears to be a widespread misapprehension. It is thought that certain scientists have shown that there is no God; and, therefore, there can be no revelation. It is true, Colonel Ingersoll essays to demonstrate that there is no God, and that there can be none; but those cultivators of science who are sometimes quoted as having said something on this subject wish to be excused from participating in "demonstrations" of this kind. There is a certain line of argument for the existence of God which does not appear to them conclusive, nor perhaps to have any

force. In stating this, nothing is necessarily said in regard to any other evidence of God's existence. With the deist the argument ends here. His religion of nature stands or falls with the intimations of God's existence to be found in nature. With the Christian the case is quite different. He presents these as collateral support to a doctrine which he also believes on other grounds. Though the light of nature is very properly appealed to, a studious and thoughtful Christian believes that without it he has sufficient ground for the doctrine of a revelation ; and if God has made a revelation of his will he certainly exists.

An advocate at the bar, after producing the most positive direct evidence to establish his case, may wish to present a statement of some ten considerations, all tending to confirm the evidence. In doing this he may meet with this difficulty : to one of the twelve jurors, on account of knowledge not in possession of the advocate, or on account of a difference of view in some way obtained, it does not appear that the consideration with which the statement opens has any bearing on the case. The force of a consideration which the advocate thought

important may here be lost. The same juror may, however, feel the full weight of the remaining nine; and he may reach the conclusion that the advocate's view of the case is correct, though he continues to differ from him in regard to the one item of collateral support.

A modern reader who thinks the statements made in the New Testament are truthful will not doubt the supernatural origin of Christianity. The consideration of collateral support, or circumstantial evidence, in this instance, has begun with intimations in nature of the existence of a Being who might have made this revelation. If, however, there is any one who sees no such intimations, I do not hesitate to ask his attention to the remaining nine, or more, considerations believed to have a bearing on the case.

Another point, however, believed to be worthy of consideration, is so nearly related to the one already stated that its value will be estimated according to the view we take of that. One who believes the adaptations seen in nature to be the result of design will believe that the religious faculty was not given without some design touching the use that was

to be made of it. The religious faculty, with the impulse which gives it the character of an instinct, has been mentioned as an intimation of God's existence. It is here mentioned as an intimation of his purpose. This peculiarity has led all nations, and nearly all tribes, of men into the performance of religious rites, and the exercise of religious hopes and fears. So generally has this tendency shown itself that the discovery of a few savage tribes exhibiting no religious ideas has occasioned surprise. The same tendency shows itself in literature. The earliest literature of ancient nations consists of religious or semi-religious poems, and the most successful of modern poetry is permeated with the same sentiment. The grandest specimens of architecture, also, have been religious temples. This tendency is not an indication of mental weakness. It shows itself in force in Pascal, Newton, Bacon, and Locke, and reaches its vanishing point in certain poorly developed, ignorant tribes. It is frequently mentioned as a leading distinction between men and brutes—nothing below man being known to have any conception of a Creator, or to be capable of a religious senti-

ment. In this peculiarity of the mind we have an intimation of the Creator's design that men should be religious; not that men are compelled to be religious, but that in the exercise of religion men should find their normal and most healthful condition. It is true, religion may degenerate into superstition and idolatry, but so also does the abuse of other faculties result in evil.

In viewing the constitution of the mind as an indication of the design of the Creator, we do not depart from the course commonly pursued in contemplating objects of nature. The belief has become very general, and very firmly fixed in the minds of men, that some of the planets of the solar system are inhabited. The belief seems to grow out of the fact that we appear to have before us the plan upon which they were made. They were made as if intended to be inhabited. The train of thought here pursued is like that pursued when we say the human mind was made as if intended for religious exercise.

In material science important discoveries have been made by tracing indications of the Creator's design. In the formation of the



heart, the arteries, and the veins, and in the motion of the heart, Harvey thought he could see the purpose for which these organs were intended, and proceeded upon this hint to experiment by tying threads around the arteries and veins of animals. An artery so tied swelled out on the side of the thread nearest to the heart, and remained small at the other side; showing that the blood flowed from the heart in the artery. A similar experiment with a vein showed that the blood flowed toward the heart in the vein. These, with later experiments and observations, have established the doctrine of the circulation of the blood.

I will not assert that we are able to discern the use of all things seen in nature; but in contemplating a prominent feature, as the hand, we can not doubt the use for which it was given. The intention shown in placing the religious faculty in the mind of man is obvious, like the intention shown in the gift of the human hand.

Take the instinct of an animal as an illustration of what is meant by the intention of the Creator to be discovered in the religious faculty. The young squirrel, untaught by the

rigors of any past Winter, makes provision for the Winter that is approaching. The intention of the Creator displays itself as plainly in the instinct that impels the squirrel to carry the hoard of nuts into his nest as in the claws and teeth by which he is enabled to eat them. Notice the love of brutes for their young, and of human beings for their children. Without this provision there would be no possibility that children, at least, should ever reach maturity. Without enumerating the various powers and tendencies of the mind, we find among them the ability to trace indications of God's existence and goodness, capacity for reverence, adoration, and trust; in short, the religious faculty. Was this given at random, with no intention on the part of the Creator? The little survey we have made of material things, and of things denominated immaterial, leads to the belief that an intention of the Creator is shown in the gift of this faculty, and that that intention is realized in the religious exercise and religious development of the race. But if God at the creation fitted men for religious exercise, we have in this another circumstance tending to diminish our surprise

at the announcement that he has by revelation furnished appropriate religious instruction.

We are next to give a little thought to the religion claimed to have been revealed. Before proceeding to Christianity proper, as presented in the New Testament, we find in relation to the Old Testament at least one of those general facts which arrest the attention, and invite a closer examination with reference to their bearing on the credibility of the New Testament account of Christ.

It is a fact that can never cease to attract attention, and, upon the supposition that all religions are of human origin, it can not fail to excite surprise, that of all the nations of antiquity there was but one that persistently maintained the worship of one God—an intellect, or spirit, not to be represented by the material imagery of idolatry—who created the entire universe. The mass of mankind were then worshipping a multitude of supposed deities, each with its peculiar characteristics; some of them the special guardians of a city or nation, or of some particular interest, as Bacchus, the god of wine. A very few persons in other ancient countries appear to have

arrived at a conception of the idea of God much like that held among the Hebrews; but these few do not appear to have made the strenuous effort to teach and maintain the worship of such a being that was made among the Hebrews. Polytheism, pantheism, and idolatry have prevailed everywhere except in the Hebrew Scriptures, and where those Scriptures have been known. Mohammedans, as well as Christians and Jews, have had access to the Hebrew Scriptures; but with the exception of these, and of such persons as have associated with the adherents of one or another of these systems, all history and all observation of the present condition of mankind show that, though men incline to be religious, a clear conception of the idea of a God is not easily attained; while the best of the conceptions on this subject that have here and there appeared have had little practical effect with the mass of the people, and have speedily disappeared beneath the surface of the muddy tide of superstitious idolatry.

If a single teacher of religion among the Jews had clearly expressed this idea, and had shown, by his efforts to keep the mass of the

people above the worship of such gods as were worshiped in their vicinity, that he appreciated its importance, his case would have been an anomaly calling for some explanation. We should perhaps attribute his attainment to some fortunate array of circumstances, or some unusual adaptation to the study of this subject. But when we find that in this single nation, for the space of fifteen hundred years, a succession of men came forward to maintain this idea, and to reclaim the people from idolatry, it becomes difficult to apply this explanation.

If we resort to some national trait, some peculiar adaptation to the study of theology developing itself among the Jewish people, then not only the great superiority of the religion of the Old Testament over other religions of antiquity, but also the grievous tendency of the Jews to backslide and fall into idolatry, leads us to doubt whether this explanation is sufficient. "Elevated positions are usually pointed," and the mass of the Jewish people frequently slid down from the elevation to which they were raised, religiously, above surrounding nations, adopting their idolatry,

to be recalled time after time by a long line of prophets.

The detail of appliances by which this course of training was carried on, and its importance to the introduction of Christianity, are left to other chapters. We are here following the course proposed in the first chapter, considering first certain general facts which invite a closer investigation of the truth of Christianity. In taking this general view of this topic, it will be appropriate to consider the length of time during which the Jewish people were undergoing a process of education and training by prophets and other religious teachers; during which a race of people inclined to idolatry, at first the slaves of idolaters, and afterward greatly influenced by the idolatry of surrounding nations, were weaned from their idolatrous inclination, so as to become at last constant worshipers of Jehovah.

From Moses, in whose time the Hebrews became a nation, to Christ, is a period of about fifteen hundred years. This is about fifteen times the number of years the United States has been an independent nation; equal to nearly four times the period elapsed since

Columbus discovered America, or a period some three hundred years greater than that during which the English language has been spoken.

The worship of some, at least, of the gods of surrounding nations, as that of Baal-Peor and of Ashtoreth, was attended with licentious rites, while the worship of Jehovah required self-denial and purity. When we bear in mind that the adage, "A down-hill road is easily traveled," is specially applicable to a race of people but partially civilized, we can easily believe that the struggle to keep the people above idolatry was arduous, as well as long-continued. According to the history we have on the subject, this labor was conducted frequently at the peril of the lives of those who undertook to perform it. It was in view of this period that Jesus declared that Jerusalem had stoned the prophets and killed them that were sent unto her. The fact that this instruction and training were continued so long, in the midst of such surroundings, resulting at last in the establishment of a nation of worshipers of the true God, is at least a very noticeable fact to be seen standing alone with-

out a parallel in history; and it may perhaps be found to be part of a scheme which extends to still higher developments in religion.

The admitted pre-eminence of Christianity may be placed in the catalogue of facts that should have their influence on the mind while studying the question of its origin. The coarser style of attack upon Christianity having been dropped by most writers on this subject, we find believers and unbelievers in revelation expressing their admiration for the life and teachings of Christ in nearly the same strains. Strauss and Rénan and Parker have spoken of Jesus in terms of eloquent eulogy. The *Toledo Index* says, "Jesus is the greatest of the purely spiritual teachers of the past." Colonel Higginson says, "The leadership of Christ is the noblest of all leaderships; but I have rejected all leaders." I will introduce some extracts from an essay by Professor Everett, of Harvard College, read before the Boston Radical Club, as reported in the *New York Tribune*:

"Christ is present to the nineteenth century at once as a problem and as a power. No questions have stirred more deeply the



heart of the age than those which have to do with his person and his office. If the age, in any fundamental forms of its thought, seems to stand in opposition to Christ, this apparent opposition is only the antithesis of elements which belong together. Christ's work was of a kind which could not be done all at once. All that it was possible for any soul to do at one epoch he did. He infused into the world a spirit of love and faith and consecration, the enthusiasm for humanity. Then he left his trust in the world, to be as the little leaven which by and by leaveneth the whole lump. His external history contains elements opposed to the spirit of this age. The very idea of a miracle is in opposition to the fundamental axioms of present thought. The writers who best represent this thought affirm with Strauss that the time is past when a miracle can be believed. But the miraculous is inextricably intertwined with the history of Christ. We have the testimony of Paul, one of the grandest souls that ever lived, to the most important of the miracles of Jesus; namely, his manifestation of himself to his disciples after his death. But if we can not eliminate the mi-

raculous from the history of Christ, neither can we eliminate from the spirit of the age that element which finds it hard to accept a miracle. The one complements the other; for it is in the face of this determined incredulity that a miracle is first seen to be really a miracle. To the savage, one thing is as strange as another; every thing is a miracle, or nothing is. From the background of absolute law, which this age has placed behind it, a miracle stands forth, demanding, yet defying, credence. It defies known law, yet proves the existence of unknown law, stretching far beyond our ken. The spirit of the age needs the miraculous to check its arrogance, to teach it that, much as it has attained, unknown worlds lie beyond. Within these external facts of Christ's history abides the vitalizing spirit of his teachings. And the leaven has not lost its power.

"Christ was not a truth seeker. He was true, indeed; but the life was more to him than the truth; to be was more than to know. He spoke with authority; and to-day he still speaks with authority to an age which is disposed to reject all authority. To him truth came by spiritual intuition; to this age it

comes by scientific scrutiny. As the voices of the natural world come to our ears without our listening to them, so the voice of God came to the ears of Christ without his listening for it. And this was the ground of the authority with which he spoke. He transmitted the word of God which he heard.

“The truth taught by Jesus and the truth taught by the age need each other, moreover. Christ taught that God is love; this has to be supplemented by the truth that God is law, and this latter truth is the offering which the spirit of the age brings to Christ. Jesus bids us love our neighbor; the steam and the lightning of this age bring our neighbor at the ends of the earth near to us, and make it practicable for us to love him. But if the truth of Jesus needs the age, still more does the age need his truth. Hard and dry, indeed, would be the mechanism of the times, the laws of science, the maxims of political economy, without the interpenetrating truth of Christ.”

“In response to Mr. Sargent’s call for a discussion, Mr. Alcott was the first speaker. He said that no question had ever been so

absolutely in the air as this, What think ye of Christ? How far are the best men and women prepared to answer, even to themselves, this question? All can say, 'I feel my heart instructs me, but when I appeal to reason I am confused.' It is no accusation of our intelligence that we have not yet come to a clear comprehension of Christ. Had we been able to do so, he would have ceased to be the Christ of our desires. It is because he is too deep for us that he answers to our needs. Our faith in him is a faith of the heart."

I will remark in regard to the opinion of Strauss concerning miracles, alluded to in these quotations, that, at about the time Strauss was writing his *Life of Christ*, Michael Faraday, to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of certain important laws of electricity and chemistry, was in the practice of preaching Christianity from time to time to the religious society of which he was a member. And it was not far from the same time that the eminent mathematician and scientist, Professor Babbage, was writing his *Bridgewater Treatise*, a part of which is a defense of miracles.

The statement of Strauss in regard to the possibility of believing a miracle should, therefore, be understood as being in part rhetorical.

Dr. Bartol, a member of the same Radical Club, has published a book called "Radical Problems." From a newspaper article on this book, by James Freeman Clarke, I will select one or two short passages.

"His reverence for Christ and Christianity appears in such expressions as these: 'But Jesus was right, as he always is—the Spirit is the Comforter.' Of one who said, 'I put myself squarely outside of Christianity,' he remarks, 'That, were it psychologically possible, were to be so far outside of God.' Of Jesus he says: 'The idea he stands for is the divine humanity.' 'He is God-man, and I hold it as unjust as ungrateful to dispute his claim.' To be sure, Dr. Bartol regards all men as made to come ultimately to the same position of oneness with God, reading literally the prayer of Christ that they may be one as we are one.

"He says that the words of Christ, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' are the balm of every burial service from the Charles to the Rhone. So that, on the whole, in regard to

the authority of Jesus, our writer inclines to that class of sons who say that they will not go to work when their father tells them, for fear of compromising their independence; but afterward go to work harder than those who professed a louder obedience. He refuses to call Christ Lord; but sits at his feet, hears his truth, and says, 'Thou hast the words of eternal life.'"

The fact that Jesus is so conspicuous a figure, so bright that those who reject his authority are still constrained to hover about him, gaze at him, make him the theme of their discussions—the fact that men who are religiously inclined, but who love to roam with sufficient freedom to take Buddha, Mohammed, and Confucius in the sweep of their studies, return hungry to Jesus, sit down among his hearers, and feast upon the words that fall from his lips—is worthy to be placed in the list of facts through which we approach the study of the evidences of Christianity.

Nor is the feeling shown in these quotations entirely different from that entertained by the mass of the people in their thoughtful moments. In rebuking the unchristian and

inhuman treatment of Chinese immigrants the New York *Tribune* said, "In this country we are all Christians after some manner," and urged a course of conduct consistent with such views.

The objections still urged occasionally against the teachings of Christ are for the most part probably due to some misapprehension of the thought presented; owing in some cases, perhaps, to inaccurate translations, in some to gradual change in the use of words in the language into which the New Testament is translated, as the word thought, in the expression, "take no thought for the morrow," intended to lead us to cast off anxiety for the future, for "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;" but sometimes understood as a prohibition against forecasting our business. Misapprehension may result from neglecting the circumstances in which a passage was uttered, the temperament and style of thought of the people addressed, and the style of expression in common use at the time and place. For instance, the passage, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," is what grammarians term hyperbole.

It is a strong injunction to meek, patient forbearance, but was not to be understood in its full, literal sense; and was not so illustrated in the experience of Jesus under injury. It may be remarked that language is used in a similar way in the New Testament in not a few other instances.

The adaptation of Christianity to the wants of men is, perhaps, one of the facts that call forth appreciative remarks like those I have quoted. I will notice it a little farther. It may be observed that Christianity is fitted to the soul somewhat as our garments are fitted to the outward form, or as a railroad car is fitted to the track on which it runs. I will only point out one feature of this adaptation. Many men are indifferent in their feelings towards God, believing that God is indifferent towards them, that he has left them in orphanage, that he has no care for them. Others are chafed by the situation in which God has placed them, and beat against their surroundings as a bird beats its wings against the bars of the cage in which it is confined. If men are to be happy, they need to feel themselves in harmony with God. They can not hope to



pass beyond his realm. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," is not only God's highest requirement, but it is a statement of our greatest need. Is not Christianity adapted to our wants at this point? An apostle answers, "We love Him because he hath first loved us." Those who contemplate the life, teachings, and death of Christ, believing that in these we have a manifestation of God's character and of his love to men, and who yield themselves obediently to the influence of the light so gained, will be gently led into the position they need to occupy, in harmony with their Maker. The love of God has been compared to the force of gravity, holding intelligent beings in their appropriate spheres about their Creator as planets are held in their harmonious orbits around the sun.\*

The danger of unbelief is pointed out in the statement quoted by Jesus, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." There is an intimation here that there are in our natures certain high capabilities that are

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\* Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation.

liable to starve if we fail to take such nourishment as may be within our reach.

If we turn from the character of Christianity to consider the improvements in society that have resulted from its establishment, we are still in the midst of facts that should incline us to a respectful consideration of the claim it puts forth concerning its origin. But at the threshold of this inquiry we pause a moment in astonishment at the fact that a young man of a small town in Galilee, without money, without political power, who committed nothing that we know of to writing, and who died at about thirty-three years of age, is ever heard of at this age, and in this part of the world. Our astonishment is greater at the fact that nearly every child in every city, village, and school-district in the most enlightened parts of the world is taught to speak his name with reverence. It is still greater at the fact that the life of this young Jewish peasant, or mechanic, should be the great event, transcending every other event in its influence on the progress of civilization.

There may, at times, be some misunderstanding as to the nature of the claim we set

up for Christianity. It is not that the man who invents a steamboat or a printing-press must necessarily be a Christian. But if we look at the races of men in the low condition in which Christianity usually reaches them, we shall see that they are not in a condition either to invent or to use inventions of great importance. Dr. Tayler Lewis asks the Anglo-Saxons, who sometimes boast a little, to "look to the hole of the pit whence they were digged." When religious and moral ideas come to be appreciated, and an orderly style of living is established, and something of general thrift begins to permeate society, then the invention and use of machinery comes to be possible. Christianity displays an affinity for schemes of education and benevolence designed to improve or ameliorate the condition of men, co-operating with them, and lending its influence to build them up. Even where benevolent institutions are built up with ostentation, and with selfish motives, Christianity may claim the credit of having made humanity popular.

Something of the theology and more of the humanity of Jesus have found their way into

general literature. In this field there is a vast army of writers who might adopt the language of the *Tribune*, "We are all Christians after some manner." Christians are sensitive when they meet passages written in an unfriendly spirit; but I think a calm examination of the literature of the present day would show that ten words are written to inculcate humane sentiments, derived directly or indirectly from Christ, to one that is written against his authority. Under the influence of these sentiments, reaching society through various channels, "instead of the thorn" has "come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar" has "come up the myrtle-tree;" so that whatever there is in material science and mechanical invention to relieve men from toil and give leisure for personal improvement, whatever in benevolent institutions to relieve the unfortunate, whatever is best in moral elevation and greatest in intellectual achievement, is seen to be disseminating itself chiefly from Christendom towards the heathen, and not coming from heathen nations towards us. Among the offerings of Christendom to the heathen world is the telegraph, which Colonel Ingersoll pictures as the

representative of implements made "for the use of man." \*

Swords still gleam and bayonets still glitter, but the spirit of the Prince of Peace, manifesting itself in sanitary commissions and Christian commissions, has ameliorated the battle-field; and men and women infused with the same spirit urge the authorities to appeal to arbitration instead of the sword in the settlement of national disputes.

Those who think Christians are inclined to overestimate the influence of Christianity in bringing about an improved state of society may take another view of the relation of the one to the other, and still find facts tending to confirm the claim Christianity puts forth in regard to its origin. The adaptation of Christianity to the religious wants of men is such that at its first propagation this fact, together with the evidence of its truth, speedily overthrew the established religions of Greece and Rome; and this was not done by outward force of armies or of political power, but as the leaven leavens the whole lump.

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\* Preface to "The Gods, and Other Lectures."

Since that time society has greatly changed ; and yet we find the boundaries of Christendom and the boundaries of the highest civilization nearly coinciding ; and intelligent men, of different races, and different beliefs in regard to the origin of Christianity, are proclaiming in language of the highest enthusiasm its adaptation to the religious wants of man. Was not the framing of a religion so adapted to the wants of men in different ages, in different conditions of civilization, and of different races, as to overthrow all other religions so far as it has been spread—so adapted that no one who has once fully received Christianity will afterwards adopt any of the other religions in the world—a task too great for human achievement? Certainly it was a task too great for the philosophers of Greece, whose attention was much given to the study of religion, but whose religions have fallen into oblivion.

But if it was a human achievement, by what men was it achieved? The age of Augustus was one of the brightest in ancient history. The age of Elizabeth has by comparison been called the Augustan age of English literature. If we were not familiar with the facts, we

might, therefore, ask whether a religion capable of perpetuating itself originated among the philosophers of Athens or the learned men of Rome. It did not, however, originate with either of these, but among some fishermen along the shore of Lake Tiberias, who reported it from the mouth of a carpenter of that region. We are reminded of the language of Jesus, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Or of that of Paul, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." To the Corinthians he wrote: "Ye see your calling, brethren; not many wise men, not many mighty, not many noble are called. God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty; yea, and things that are not to bring to naught things that are."

Some who grow tired of the sound of eulogy bestowed on Christianity will ask, "Are there not men in the Church who are dodging away from their creditors, and using the tricks of trade?" To which I answer, Yes; there

appear to be dishonest men in all branches of the Christian Church ; but the bearing of this and kindred weaknesses upon the argument in regard to revelation appears to me to have been misapprehended. The religion of the Bible is, in one view of it, a collection of precepts that are useful to those who practice them, or who make a sincere effort to practice them, whether they are in the Church or out ; and that are of no value to those who do not make this effort, whether in the Church or out.

In the Old Testament we have the history of a people but partially enlightened, whose imperfections in practice should be viewed with forbearance. In the early Christian Church, when the profession of Christianity was made at the hazard of life, we should expect to find purity and sincere earnestness : and this is the report history has brought down from that period. From the third century to the present time designing men have at times attached themselves to the Church from selfish or dishonest motives. It would be proper to look into the New Testament to see whether that has furnished aid and comfort to such men in dishonesty, or whether the im-



pulse is from some other source. In these cases Christianity is misrepresented; but to the casual observer it appears in an unfavorable light.

A similar remark may be made in regard to persecutions which have occurred among Christians. Some sanction or encouragement for them should be found in the New Testament before we permit ourselves to receive from those persecutions a prejudice against Christianity. As an effort has been made, by means of pictorial representations of persecutions done "for the love of God," to produce an aversion towards all religions, including the Christian religion, it will be proper to spend a moment in pointing out the fact that, so far as Christianity is concerned, this is merely a vigorous stroke of one who beats the air.\*

It is true, the disciples of Christ were taught to expect persecution; but instructions to inflict it when circumstances should permit would have been quite a different matter. Such expressions as, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;" and the

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\* Preface to Ingersoll's "The Gods, and Other Lectures."

words spoken to Peter when he proposed to defend the Master with a sword, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," some doubtless will believe to have been prompted by the caution which existing circumstances required, though the words, "all they that take the sword," would seem to have been intended for disciples in all ages. We have, however, special illustrations of the manner in which Jesus expected the true kingdom of heaven to advance, from which all violence seems to be excluded. He illustrates by the process of vegetable growth, in which particle by particle silently and quietly takes its place, till the plant, when grown to maturity, shelters the birds of the air. "Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." Quietly it extends from particle to particle till every portion has felt its influence.

A certain passage has been quoted as if it were not in keeping with these illustrations: "Think not that I am come to send peace on

earth : I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

This is part of a discourse of considerable length, the drift of which can not be mistaken ; and there is a statement of the circumstances in which the discourse was given. The discourse and circumstances leave no excuse for the insinuation that here is a sanction to persecution.

The occasion of this address was the sending out of the apostles to preach and to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They were sent as an act of compassion towards the multitudes, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. This work was hazardous to the apostles who were so sent forth. The passage before quoted, " Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," is part of this discourse. From this he proceeds to show the disciples that they could not expect to escape persecution ; that they should

certainly be treated as he had been treated ; but he exhorts them not to fear those who can kill only the body. There is a constantly renewed strife between right and wrong ; and the introduction of the Gospel, like other reforms, awoke discords which separated even the members of a family. Jesus does not teach his disciples that in such an emergency they should sell their lives as dearly as they could ; nor that it would be better to take the lives of others than to lose their own ; but he teaches them that it would be better to lose their lives than to desert the cause in which they had enlisted, saying, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

About seven hundred years before this, Isaiah looked forward to the coming of a Messiah who should be called the Prince of Peace, who should give his influence to the introduction of a state of society in which swords should be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks, and men should not hurt nor destroy. We may be several hundreds of years, perhaps some thousands of years, from the finest of the scenes painted on the canvas which Isaiah passes before us ; but

there is no recorded word of Jesus, who claimed to be the Messiah, that is not in harmony with the sentiments Isaiah expected the Messiah to teach. There can be no insinuation more ungrounded, or more ungrateful, than that which uses persecution as a means of prejudicing men against Jesus.

The general facts discussed in these two opening chapters, from the intimations we have in nature of the existence of God to the character and influence of Christianity, are thought to be such as invite a closer examination of the claims of Christianity. They are also here presented as circumstantial evidences tending to confirm the statements made by the New Testament writers in regard to Jesus.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

**B**EFORE attempting to draw arguments from special features, or parts, of the Old Testament, it will be well for us to consider the general purpose of that part of the Bible.

The tenacity with which the nations of antiquity clung to idolatry, and the difficulties met in the effort to uproot it and remove it from a small tract of country, are astonishing to one who looks back upon the Old Testament history from the stand-point of a Christian civilization; and yet certain writers, who have turned their attention to the early religious condition of man, are dipping their pens into a blacker ink, and giving to their picture of that early period a still darker shading; for while the Old Testament gives us a glimpse of a patriarchal age, in which men worshiped God in comparative simplicity, with but few, if any, of the peculiar rites of idolatry, these

writers believe barbarism to have been primitive and universal. Herbert Spencer, taking this view, is quoted as having said, in a late book, that "the Lord to whom Abraham gave his allegiance was a superior chieftain, not the Almighty God."

Whether the work of which we have the minutes in the Old Testament is looked upon as the establishment of the worship of the true God in the midst of primitive and universal barbarism and idolatry, or as the re-establishment and perpetuation of that worship where it had well-nigh disappeared, the scheme for the accomplishment of this end, as well as the end itself, is strangely different from any thing to be found elsewhere in the world's history; and the studies of writers of the class referred to, cause the institutions of the Old Testament to stand out in higher relief. Readers of the Bible will not doubt that the tendency to superstition, idolatry, and debasing modes of worship was as strong as these writers believe it to have been. Wherever the ancient world is looked in upon, this tendency appears as a murky current of sufficient force to bear down and carry before it all ordinary barriers.

These were the circumstances in which the work of establishing an intelligent worship of God was begun.

The first step in the progress of this work, as we see it in the Bible, was the establishment of the idea of the unity of God, and the separation of his worship from idolatry. The second step was taken when a more complete knowledge of the character of God, and of his thoughts and feelings towards men, was imparted in the life, teachings, and death of Christ.

Abraham, the father of the race which was afterward trained under the institutions of the Old Testament to the worship of Jehovah, was, according to the only information we have concerning him, called from heathendom, for the purpose of initiating that work, about nineteen hundred years before Christ. The descendants of Abraham, with such others as had attached themselves to these, were formed into a nation under Moses about fifteen hundred years before Christ.

On opening the Bible we meet with certain writings, the first five books of the Old Testament, attributed in some sense to Moses, as



their writer or compiler, and which were perhaps in part written and in part compiled by him. The reader of these books, especially of the farewell addresses in the book of Deuteronomy, whether he recognizes a superhuman intervention and supervision in this work or not, will not fail to perceive that Moses is intent above all things upon making the worship of Jehovah, with the rejection of idolatry, witchcraft, and the related superstitions, the chief corner-stone of the nation he is founding.

Having observed the intensity of this feeling, we naturally seek through it to understand the institutions and the writings of Moses; especially do we inquire whether these tended to the accomplishment of the end so much desired.

A portion of these writings consists of the laws of the nation, and the ritual of the Hebrew worship. A portion has the character of a diary, or record of passing events during the leadership of Moses. Special reference is perhaps had to these portions in what is said in the thirty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, though the law included all the writings of Moses. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made

an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death!"

If truthful, these writings were a record of such events as would show the extreme folly of rebellion against the Lord and alliance with idolatry. The words quoted also show that preparing certain writings for immediate use, or for use during the struggle between monotheism and idolatry, was the thought in the mind of Moses, rather than that of making a book for late generations and distant people. A portion of these writings is historical; giving a connected account of the children of Abraham down to the time of Moses. Advantage is here taken of the tendency to follow in the footsteps of fathers and forefathers which is found in every nation, by showing that the

Lord to whom the people were instructed to give their allegiance had been the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. A portion is introductory to this history, and stretches back to the creation. Did this introductory portion further the work of training the Hebrew people to the worship of Jehovah, or guard them against any form of idolatry? Perhaps no portion of the writings of Moses was more efficient in furthering this work. Whether "the Lord to whom Abraham gave his allegiance" was a superior chieftain, or was not, it is true that unnumbered multitudes of that period and of later periods did give themselves to the worship of departed heroes. Nothing could have been better devised than was this introductory portion of the writings of Moses, to check among the Hebrews the hero-worship to which other nations were given. Here is a list of all the prominent characters among the ancestors of that people back to the creation. Among them no one is presented as an object of worship; while the jealous God who leads the Israelites forbids that the worship due to himself should be divided with inferior deities. That no hero,

chieftain, or man, however superior, living or dead, is the proper object of worship, and that the Maker of all things, and Judge of all men, is the proper object, became palpably evident to one so instructed.

There are many questions of interest clustering about the Mosaic account of the creation upon which we can not now enter; but it will be according to the plan of this chapter to ask why Moses wrote on the creation with such light as he had, whether it is thought to have been much or little. The account of the creation, with the other writings of Moses, was placed in the side of the ark, an ornamented chest borne by the Levites when the camp advanced. These writings were read to the people at stated times, and became the nucleus of a Hebrew literature. The Mosaic account of the creation in this way was used as part of the educating appliances by which a people was trained. In this primary use its purpose was not so much to teach the order of creation, as to give to the race undergoing this religious training as clear an idea as possible of the Being they were instructed to worship, and of his relation to nature and to man.

There is a tendency to worship created objects instead of the Creator—something visible, if not tangible, instead of the invisible God. There are those at the present time who warn us against limiting the powers of nature, and teach that, though there is no God, mere matter will probably give us a future state. Whether there is here an adoration of nature amounting to idolatry I do not know; but the worship of objects of nature, especially of the sun, moon, and stars, the whole host of heaven, has been one of the most frequent forms of idolatry. Through intercourse with neighboring nations this type of idolatry frequently sprang up in Judah and Israel, groves being planted on high places for its accommodation. It is evident that Moses was apprehensive that this would be the case, as is shown by such remarks as: "Take heed . . . lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them and serve them." For a people concerning whom Moses felt this apprehension he could not have provided a better course of instruction than the account of the

creation, showing that the Being they were taught to worship is superior to all these shining hosts—the Maker of them all.

As it was the purpose of the institutions of Moses to train a people to the worship of the true God and the rejection of idolatry, and not to furnish a model civil government, the civil code of the Jews will be considered only incidentally, and with reference to objections made to it. While the process of religious training was in progress it was necessary that some provision be made for the civil government of the people. It has, I think, been established by experience that, in matters of civil government, laws far in advance of the people to be governed are not profitable, and will not be enforced. It has been found necessary at the present day that a laborious process of educating the people should precede the enactment of just laws in relation to the sale of intoxicating liquors. The civil code of Moses is a collection of laws designed for the government of an uncivilized people, surrounded by tribes among whom cruel and barbarous customs were the rule, and not the exception. In a few instances the

laws of Moses appear to be a compromise between strict justice and the sentiments of the people. So the civil code of Moses was viewed by Christ, and so it may properly be viewed by Christians. In the days of Malachi certain abuses had grown up under the divorce law of Moses, which the prophet rebukes. Wives were dealt with treacherously and cruelly, being put away for unimportant causes. At the time of Christ there appears to have been a difference of opinion, and certain Pharisees asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" He answered in the negative. "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Here it appears that the civil code of Moses is looked upon as a collection of temporary provisions adapted to the people for whom they were made, provisions which permitted the continuance of some existing evils, while they acted as checks to greater evils.

Taking up again the trace of the great

scheme which runs through the writings and the institutions of Moses, we find that a considerable and very emphatic portion of the Decalogue consists of prohibitions against idolatry.

We are next to consider the complex system of religious ceremonies connected at first with the tabernacle, and afterwards transferred to the temple, which was merely a more permanent building for the perpetuation of the same system of worship. To understand the part taken by the ceremonial law in training and educating the Jews, we must consider the condition the people were in when the law was given, and also their surroundings. They were not only ignorant and in a semi-barbarous condition, but during their long stay in Egypt they had largely adopted the religion of Egypt, which was both ceremonious and idolatrous. On leaving Egypt and entering Palestine, they were still surrounded by systems of idolatry having their priests and ceremonies. Towards some of these systems of religion they were attracted and enticed by licentious rites; towards others they were driven by superstitious fears. They appear at



the same time to have been unable fully to realize the existence and power of an invisible God. The golden calf, made by the Israelites during a short absence of Moses, was intended to represent Jehovah, the God who had brought them out of Egypt. It was a symbolical representation of deity with which they had become familiar in Egypt. They were evidently entirely unprepared to receive and maintain the purely spiritual worship introduced by Jesus some fifteen hundred years later. A system of worship occupying an intermediate place between heathenism and Christianity became a substitute for idol-worship and the ceremonies attending it. The glitter of the costly furniture of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, together with the succession of religious rites conducted there, presented attractions which tended to counteract the influence of the idolatrous systems with which the Jews were in constant contact. The religious ceremonies themselves were not meaningless; but, besides being prophetic of the sacrifice of Christ, they were of such a character as to teach the moral purity or holiness of God, and to inspire a reverence for

him which was not felt by the heathen towards their deities. Though the law of Moses continued a ceremonious system in some respects like the religions of the heathen, those ceremonies were limited by the fact that they could be conducted only at one point in the nation. This central religion, and the costly temple at which it was conducted, came also to be matters of deep national interest, by which the people were held together and kept from being absorbed into the heathen nations about them.

The fact should also be recalled that, previous to the coming of Christ and the establishment of Christianity, the offering of sacrifices was not peculiar to the religion of the Jews, but was an expression of the religious sentiment existing in man, and was to be witnessed in every part of the ancient world.

The chief fact of interest, however, in regard to the Jewish temple, is that fact in regard to which it differed entirely from the temples of the heathen. Heathen temples were the abodes of gods of wood, stone, or metal, either wrought or cast, which were worshiped by the people. The walls of Egyptian temples

were covered with drawings or paintings of sacred animals, before which the people bowed in adoration.

The superstitious awe with which the people looked upon these images was doubtless increased in many instances by legends in regard to their origin. We get an insight into the influences by which idolatry was sustained in the account of the riot at Ephesus, given in the New Testament:

“And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all

Asia and the world worshipeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

“And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theater. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theater.

“Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defense unto the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

“And when the townclerk had appeased the

people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things can not be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly."

From this account it is evident that not only the people of Ephesus, but the people throughout Asia Minor, believed that the image, lodged in the magnificent temple at Ephesus, fell down from heaven; and that the silver-smiths profited by that belief.

The Jews were forbidden to make, or to have, either at the temple or elsewhere, any representation of God, or of any being, real or imaginary, worshiped as God.

In regard to the origin of the various types of idolatry, Colonel Ingersoll has some words which appear to me so truthful and so appropriate that I will quote them:

"No god was ever in advance of the nation that created him. The negroes represented their deities with black skins and curly hair. The Mongolian gave to his a yellow complexion, and dark, almond-shaped eyes. The Jews

were not allowed to paint theirs, or we should have seen Jehovah with a full beard, an oval face, and an aquiline nose. Zeus was a perfect Greek, and Jove looked as though a member of the Roman senate. The gods of Egypt had the patient face and placid look of the loving people who made them. The gods of northern countries were represented warmly clad in robes of fur; those of the tropics were naked. The gods of India were often mounted upon elephants; those of some islanders were great swimmers, and the deities of the Arctic zone were passionately fond of whale's blubber. Nearly all people have carved or painted representations of their gods, and these representations were, by the lower classes, generally treated as the real gods, and to these images and idols they addressed prayers and offered sacrifices."

That these representations—the images and idols—were treated as real gods is well known; but how strange the exception, here casually noted, to a course which seems to have been nearly universal;\* and every student of the Old

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\* See end of this chapter.

Testament, who is familiar with the history of the Jews for the first thousand years after their settlement in Palestine, is ready to underscore what Colonel Ingersoll says in regard to what they would have done if they had been allowed. Their entire history during that thousand years shows that they were none too elevated, and none too good, to do it. They would have made the image with the aquiline nose. They would have treated it as the real God. They would have bowed down before it and worshiped it. The lowest type of superstition—that which lies at the base of idolatry—would have prevailed everywhere, as it has prevailed on every spot of earth where the Old Testament has not been known. But then they *were* forbidden. This prohibition was made as conspicuous as it could be made, by being placed in the Decalogue. It was given all the emphasis that language could express: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them." To this was added the emphasis of constant

repetition; as in a later chapter of the same book: "Thou shalt make thee no molten gods."

To recite the passages in the writings of Moses in which idolatry is forbidden, and those in which the fearful consequences of a return to idolatry are predicted, would be tedious; but it may be of interest to spend a moment upon a passage which seems to indicate that Moses was apprehensive that the people might take the particular course pointed out by Colonel Ingersoll. Those who do not believe that the giving of the law was attended by the supernatural events described in the account of it, will still realize that the receiving of the law was the great event in the establishment of the Jewish nation. To this event they would naturally look back with deep interest. From this event legends might easily arise to the effect that the great Author of the law had then been seen, tracing the outlines of his figure, and stating the majesty of his appearance. This step being taken, a ground would have been gained for painting and sculpture to produce representations of Jehovah. The tendency to this course, which



Colonel Ingersoll believes to have been in the Jews, and which Moses suspected, is met by a statement of much value to the artist who might aspire to display representations of this kind. The twelfth verse of the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy reads: "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice." Passing then to the fifteenth verse, we read: "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female." These words are followed by a list of idolatries, all forbidden; as, making the likeness of beast, or fowl, or creeping thing, or fish; and closing with the words: "And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them and serve them." The opening words of this list, "The likeness of male or female," appear to be an allusion to the course idolatry is

known to have almost universally taken in ancient nations. In Egypt the Israelites had been familiar with the worship of Osiris and Isis, male and female deities of Egypt. Both were beneficent beings. Osiris was slain by his evil brother Typhon, his body fitted into a chest, thrown into the Nile, and swept out to sea. Isis his wife seeks his body along the Nile. On entering Palestine the Israelites were still in contact with similar though more austere conceptions. The chief male deity of those regions was variously named in different localities—Baal, Chemosh, Malcham, Molech; the chief female deity—Astarte, Ashteroth, Ashtoreth, Asherah. Though the mythology of Greece and Rome was unknown to the Israelites of that day, it may be mentioned as an illustration of the tendency of idolatry. The gods of these nations were male and female. In fact, they were men and women with very human passions, having a little greater power than ordinary mortals, and a slightly different diet. These conceptions led in sculpture to a great display of statues and images of the gods. Moses states that no similitude of Jehovah had been seen, and warns

the people against attempting representations for which they had no foundation. This statement becomes a part of those writings which were carefully kept for reference, and of which copies were commanded to be made for special uses. Here is a check to the tendency to make those material representations of gods, male and female, which doubtless led to idolatry, as Colónel Ingersoll supposes.

It was appropriate that one who has said and written much about superstition should note this exception to the custom, otherwise nearly universal among primitive nations. It is understood that to an atheist even the worship of the Maker of all things is superstition; and yet from his stand-point it may be seen that Moses and the religious teachers who worked under the institutions established by him left no nerve or muscle unused in the effort to lift the people of their nation above the influence of superstition of a much more debasing character.

It is said by those who have amassed fortunes that the great struggle is to get the first one thousand dollars. In the work of liberating men from the fetters of superstition, the

religious teachers of the Old Testament took up this initiatory struggle. They endured the heat and burden of the day; and it will not only be ungenerous, but unmanly, to refuse honor to whom honor is due. They for the first time demonstrated that not only a few leading minds, but the mass of the people throughout a nation, may be enabled to trample their fetters under their feet, and engage in a worship which, instead of degrading, develops and ennobles human nature.

Before leaving that part of this scheme which I wish to trace in the writings of Moses, some mention should be made of those minute directions and minute prohibitions by which the Jews were to be kept from the customs of idolaters. Some of these prohibit practices prevalent in and about heathen temples, degrading to humanity and revolting to civilized taste; and some prohibit practices which seem to have been wrong only because they were idolatrous. Some such passages have been misunderstood because the prohibition is not accompanied by a statement of the custom to be kept in check by it. Colònel Ingersoll, in his Lecture on the Gods, says:

"From their starry thrones they frequently came to the earth for the purpose of imparting information to man. It is related of one that he came, amid thunderings and lightnings, in order to tell the people that they should not cook a kid in its mother's milk."

The explanation of this passage, commonly accepted, I will quote from M'Clintock and Strong's *Ecclesiastical Encyclopædia*:

"The thrice-repeated and much-vexed passage, 'Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk,' interpreted by some as a precept of humanity, is explained by Cudworth in a very different manner. He quotes from a Karaite commentary, which he had seen in manuscript: 'It was a custom of the ancient heathens, when they had gathered in all their fruits, to take a kid and boil it in the dam's milk, and then in a magical way go about and besprinkle with it all the trees and fields and gardens and orchards; thinking by this means they should make them fructify, and bring forth again more abundantly the following year.'"

When we consider the condition in which these people then were, together with the rest

of mankind, we can not doubt that what was needed more than any thing else was a system of minute directions and prohibitions by which they might be led away from superstition and idolatry. However minute the steps so taken may have been, they were steps leading directly towards the accomplishment of that revolution more completely inaugurated by Christ, which Rénan pronounces the capital event in the history of the world.

Though the scheme for the elimination of idolatry is conspicuous in nearly every part of the Old Testament, there is no feature of that scheme which may not also be traced in the writings of Moses, taken separately; and this is a fact to which special attention will be called in another chapter. But it will be of interest to notice the writings of some who labored to carry out the scheme delivered by Moses.

When we consider the great anxiety of the prophets to destroy idolatry, and the labor they continually performed to effect this object, we shall expect to find that prophecy itself was among the appliances by which this end was to be accomplished. This I think

will be our expectation, whether we believe prophecy to have been the foretelling of such events as could not have been foretold by natural means, or to have been something akin to fortune-telling. Prophecy was so used in many ways. I shall specially point out only one instance.

The prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus, as the leader of the host that should overthrow Babylon, is preceded and introduced by the most scathing rebuke of idolatry on record. If some of the words on idolatry which are mingled with this prophecy are introduced here, we shall not only see the bearing and use of the prophecy, but we shall get an insight into the feeling that animated the prophet. God is represented as speaking:

“Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed; and the workmen,

they are of men : let them all be gathered together, let them stand up : yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

“The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms : yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth ; he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule ; he marketh it out with a line ; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man ; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest : he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

“Then shall it be for a man to burn : for he will take thereof, and warm himself ; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ; yea, he maketh a god, and worshipeth it ; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire ; with part thereof he eateth flesh ; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied : yea, he warmeth himself, and



saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshipeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

“They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they can not see; and their hearts, that they can not understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he can not deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?”

Of the prophecy itself, which immediately follows, I will quote only a few words which have a bearing on the unity of God:

“Thus saith the Lord, . . . that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; . . . that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messen-

gers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

“For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. . . . They shall be ashamed, and also

confounded, all of them; they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols."

About one hundred and seventy-five years after this prophecy was written, Cyrus issued a proclamation restoring the Jews, who had then been for seventy years in bondage, and directing the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. Though this proclamation does not mention the prophecy, it follows its thoughts and its wording so nearly that we can scarcely doubt that the prophecy was before him.

No attempt will be made at this time to show that this prophecy was fulfilled; the intention being merely to point out prophecy, with what is claimed to be fulfillment, as one of the appliances used in the scheme of training and education we have under consideration.

To point out all the means used to accomplish the end proposed in this scheme would be tedious, while it would not be important to our present purpose. It has been my aim to give prominence to the fact that the outlines of the scheme by which idolatry was done away still exist, and may easily be traced in the Old Testament.

To learn something of the success of this

scheme may add to our respect for the collection of books in which it is traced. By their fruits ye shall know them. Those fruits will be presented in the language of Rénan—in words used by him to show the condition of society in which Christianity arose; the chapter from which they are taken being entitled “Place of Jesus in the World’s History.”

“The idea that Israel is a nation of saints, a tribe chosen of God, and bound to him by a covenant, roots itself more and more immovably. An immense expectation fills every soul. All Indo-European antiquity had placed Paradise at the beginning; all its poets had wept a golden age departed. Israel placed the golden age in the future. The eternal poetry of religious souls, the Psalms, were born of this exalted pietism, with their divine and melancholy harmony. Israel became truly and pre-eminently the people of God, while about it the pagan religions became more and more degraded, in Persia and Babylonia to an official charlatanry, in Egypt and Syria to a crude idolatry, in the Greek and Latin world to parades. What the Christian martyrs did in the first centuries of our era, what the victims of persecuting ortho-

doxy did in the very bosom of Christianity up to our time, the Jews did during the two centuries which preceded the Christian era. They were a living protest against superstition and religious materialism.”\*

Here, when Moses has been for twelve hundred years, or fifteen hundred years, quietly resting in his unknown grave, the scheme for the elimination of idolatry reaches the triumphant accomplishment of the end for which it was established.

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\* The Persians may be cited as a people who did not worship images in the forms of men and beasts, but they probably at the first that is known of them, and certainly later, worshiped objects of nature. The prohibition placed on the Jews restrained them from that type of religious materialism which manifested itself, and increased, among the Persians, as well as from the grosser type more frequently met. It is the conception of God held by the Jews, and not that held by the Persians, which has extended to modern civilized nations, and has helped to give them that civilization.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

## CONTINUED.

IN the preceding chapter a scheme for the elimination of idolatry was traced. The present chapter will consist of a number of disconnected remarks upon that scheme, and the religion to which the Jews were led by it.

In an argument presenting circumstantial evidences, the attempt is not to demonstrate the truth of Christianity, but to point out an array of facts which accord well with the view that the New Testament writers wrote the truth, and which do not accord so well with any other view. The remarks to be made in this chapter will partake of this character. They will present facts which, as it appears to me, accord well with the claim continually put forth in the Old Testament, that this scheme was of divine origin; and which do not accord so well with any other view.

1. The first of these remarks is suggested by the relation between the general enlightenment of the various nations and tribes of men and their religions, as pointed out by those who have made this subject a special study, and referred to by Colonel Ingersoll. In an address on the "Social and Religious Condition of the Lower Races of Man," Sir John Lubbock says, "Every increase in science—that is, in positive and ascertained knowledge—brings with it an elevation of religion." Colonel Ingersoll says, "The savage, as he emerges from a state of barbarism, gradually loses faith in his idols of wood and stone, and in their place puts a multitude of spirits. As he advances in knowledge he generally discards the petty spirits, and in their stead believes in one, whom he supposes to be infinite and supreme." In the passage quoted in the previous chapter he says, "No god was ever in advance of the nation that created him."

It will not be questioned on the one hand that the Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans were greatly superior to the Jews in general advancement in knowledge, nor on the other that the Jews were greatly superior to the

Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans in religion. It has been very properly said that "the Jews were men in religion, and children in every thing else."

Here is a religion superior to the religions found among the most enlightened men of that period. Was it created by the men of that inferior nation? I do not insist on making the most exacting use of the premises furnished by these writers; but here is a state of things that accords well with the claim put forth in the Old Testament, that the origin of its religion was superhuman.

2. "History repeats itself." This adage is well worn; and it is not more true in any thing else than in religion. What has happened in one barbarous tribe, or semi-barbarous tribe, has happened, substantially, in another barbarous tribe, or semi-barbarous tribe, the differences being differences of form rather than of substance; but in the scheme for uprooting idolatry we meet something that has not repeated itself. Nothing like it has ever appeared at any other period of time, or in any other part of the world.

3. The view likely to be taken by those



who do not admit the claim to divine origin is, that there was in the Jews a tendency to develop a more elevated conception of God than was gained by other nations. This view has been taken by some writers on Jewish history.

There is advancement in the religious and moral ideas of the mass of the people to be found in the Old Testament; but the manner in which this advancement is made is in sharp contrast with the manner in which that advancement is made which results from an inherent tendency, or trait of character. The manner in which the Jews advanced to religious conceptions superior to the religious conceptions of the rest of mankind may be contrasted with the manner in which the Anglo-Saxon race, having an inherent love of liberty, have advanced to the freedom now enjoyed in England and the United States.

Early English history displays the people not only in the fetters of ignorance, but with very insufficient defenses of their personal and political rights. Through various struggles and by various steps they secured one right after another, till in 1215 the Great Charter,

considered the "basis of English liberty," was obtained. The force of the sentiment which demanded the Great Charter, and the amount of the struggle to secure it, have been underestimated, on account of the belief that it was wrenched from a feeble king. Green's "History of the English People" says: "The closer study of John's history clears away the charges of sloth and incapacity with which men tried to explain the greatness of his fall. The awful lesson of his life rests on the fact that it was no weak and indolent voluptuary, but the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins, who lost Normandy, became the vassal of the pope, and perished in a struggle of despair against English freedom."

From this it appears that the Great Charter was secured because the aspirations for freedom were irrepressible. These aspirations were held in check by such barriers as a powerful and selfish king could erect; but the barriers gave way before them. Whatever declaration of rights, whatever security against encroachments upon those rights, appeared in the Great Charter and became part of the English Constitution, that declaration and those secu-

rities appeared in the midst of the struggle to obtain them, instead of being found in existence at some previous period. Each succeeding step has been taken in a similar way.

Looking at the results at length reached in the Constitutions of England and the United States—the declarations of rights and the means provided to secure them—and at the same time looking at the statement of religious conceptions contained in the writings of Moses, and the provision of means which should at length make those religious conceptions the property of the mass of the people throughout the Jewish nation, we shall say that if the present Constitutions of England and the United States had been found in existence at the dawn of English history, and the reluctant people had only with the lapse of succeeding centuries been goaded forward to accept the freedom for which such explicit provision had been made at the beginning, then we could compare the advancement in freedom in the one case with the advancement in religion in the other, pointing out their resemblances; but as the case actually stands we can only contrast the advancement

in freedom with the advancement in religion, pointing out their differences.

The exalted conception of God to which the Jews were to be led, appears in the first sentence of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" and no feature of the scheme for the elimination of idolatry is wanting in the writings of Moses taken separately from the rest of the Old Testament. If prophecy was used by later writers, so also it was used by Moses. If miracles are claimed to have been performed by later prophets, so also they are claimed to have been performed by Moses. The tabernacle built in the days of Moses is the pattern for the temple of Solomon. When Ezra, Nehemiah, and their co-laborers take up the task of rebuilding Jerusalem after the captivity, we find their sole aim to be to bring all things into conformity with the law of Moses. When the old dispensation had done its work, and the new was being introduced, we find charges brought against Stephen of having said that Jesus of Nazareth should destroy the temple and change the customs which Moses had delivered.

It is certain that the scheme for the elimination of idolatry was not the gradual growth of centuries. If it is of merely human origin it sprang fully equipped from the brain of Moses, as Minerva was fabled to have sprung fully armed from the brain of Jupiter.

For fear that I may not have made this contrast so plain as I wish it to be, I will illustrate it. A tract of land may in the course of years be owned and occupied in succession by various members of a family having a taste for the improvement of their premises. Though the ancestor who first owned this tract of land prescribed no plan according to which improvement should take place, an improvement at length displays itself in the premises because of the taste possessed by each of the persons who have occupied them. Advancement towards a display of taste in this case is made, as advancement towards liberty has in the course of centuries been made by Anglo-Saxons, because of inherent aspirations for it.

A tract of land may in the course of years be occupied by several tenants, no one of whom has a taste for improving the part he occupies, and yet improvement at length displays itself

because of the proprietor's prescribed plan, and because of certain agreements, or covenants. Advancement towards a display of taste in this case is made as advancement among the Jews was made toward a more elevated religion than existed among other nations, the plan of all the religious improvement ever made among the Jews having been prescribed in the writings of Moses.

In this contrast we find facts which accord well with the claim put forth in the Old Testament, that in the religious progress of the Jews we have something different from the development of a national trait.

4. The history of the Phœnicians, so far as we are acquainted with it, is suggestive; because if the religious progress among the Jews is the development of a national trait, there are reasons for expecting to find a similar development among the Phœnicians.

The Jews occupied the hills of Palestine, a few miles inland from the Mediterranean, from which they were separated in part by the country of the Phœnicians, which stretched along the shore. Phœnicia was about two hundred miles in length, and twelve miles in width in

its widest parts, but usually much less. It contained several important cities, the chief of which were Tyre and Sidon.

The Jews and Phœnicians appear to have been nearly related races. They were intimately associated in matters of business, and their relations were usually friendly. They used the same language, or languages nearly identical. As a commercial people, some traits of character were developed in the Phœnicians which have become conspicuous in the Jews since they have become a commercial people. The ability to accumulate property was marked among the Phœnicians. The commercial activity and the prosperity of Tyre are the subjects of glowing language in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of Ezekiel. Isaiah says of Tyre: "The crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth." Certainly the Phœnicians could make money; and the Jews can do this. The merchants and financiers among them are princes, and their traffickers are the honorable of the earth.

One of the many occupations of the Phœnicians was peddling through Syria and Pales-

tine the products of their industries at home, and the goods which an extensive commerce brought to their seaport towns.

At the rebuilding of Jerusalem, when Nehemiah was annoyed by persons from Tyre who led the Jews to break the Sabbath, they were trying about the gates of Jerusalem to sell fish, and various wares. "There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem." To prevent this practice the gates of Jerusalem were ordered to be shut on the evening before the Sabbath, and kept shut till the Sabbath should be past. Nehemiah adds, "So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath."

Those who have lived at points east of the great lakes will be reminded of the bent form of the Jew Dutchman, under his well-filled pack, pressing his footsteps towards the door-



way, and ready to drive a good trade; and perhaps also of Saxe's allusion, in "Miss M'Bride," to "Moses, the peddling German Jew."

If the religious advancement among the Jews was the development of a national trait, it should be expected that the history of a people so nearly related, so closely associated, using the same language, and having similar characteristics, would show something of a like tendency to advance in religion. I will quote a part of the language of Dr. Arnold, used in the American Cyclopædia.

"Of their religion, we know from Scripture, and from more recent history, that it was a cruel and bloody superstition. They worshiped on high places; and they had sacred groves, as well as idols, which were held in particular abomination by the true subjects of the Jewish theocracy, and which were yet constantly owned as gods, frequented, and worshiped by the backsliders, both of the princes and of the people of Israel; a singular proof, if proof were needed, of the close connection both in race and language, as well as in social habits and modes of thought, between the children of Israel and the Phœni-

cians, whether of Syria or Africa, who called themselves Canaanites. . . . Their principal god was Baal, Belsamen, or the ancient one, Moloch, as he was called by the Jewish rabbinical writers, who was considered by the Greeks as identical with Saturn, and who, in process of time, became in some features assimilated to Apollo. He was evidently the fire-god, or sun-god, and to him were offered the human sacrifices, of children more especially, who were placed on the extended palms of the metallic statue, whence they rolled into a fiery furnace. To the sun-god was associated a female deity, expressive, it is believed, of the productive power of nature under the generative power of the sun, worshiped as the queen of heaven, Ashtoreth or Astarte, who is identical with the Venus Mylitta of Babylon, the Avaitis of Armenia, and the Venus Urania of Cyprus, of whose rites the sexual lusts were as distinct a feature as was the fiery death the head and front of those of the male deity."

The tendency to advance in religion, for which we set out to look, does not appear in this description. The remark of Paley in regard to the Jews may be reversed and applied

to the Phœnicians: They were children in religion, and men in every thing else. And nothing better was ever discovered, in relation to religion, in the history of the Phœnicians. They continued to offer human sacrifices down to the time of the Roman emperors and the coming of Christ.

If we incline to believe that an adaptation to advancement in religion was latent in the Phœnicians, and would display itself in favorable circumstances, the facts of Old Testament history tend to dispel that belief; for we find that it is just when the Jewish monotheism is maintained in its greatest purity that the two nations are most associated, and there appears to have been no buried spark to be brightened by this association.

The fact that nothing analogous to the religious progress among the Jews appears among the Phœnicians accords well with the claim put forth in the Old Testament, that the religious progress of the Jews was due to something more than the natural development of a national trait.

5. The history of the religions of India, Persia, Egypt, and Greece indicates that with-

out the special helps found only in the Old Testament the mass of the people of any nation were unable to withstand the undertow of superstitious fears which was continually carrying men into idolatry.

Though the religion taught by Buddha, in India, approaches as nearly to a moral atheism as to the worship of the Being whom Christians esteem the true God, Buddha was a breaker of idols. And yet, almost from the time of Buddha to the present day, Buddhistic temples have been well supplied with images of Buddha himself, which have been worshiped by the people.

The early Persians were monotheists, though inclined to dualism, and given to magic and astrology. Later, they worshiped the sun and fire, and had degenerated into what Rénan terms charlatanry. The course of their religious history is downward.

It is believed that monotheism gained some slight foothold in Egypt at an early day. Whether the few who held this view were entirely free from idolatry can perhaps scarcely be determined; but, whatever may have been the purity in which this sentiment was held,

it probably did not disseminate itself, and certainly did not maintain its ground. The religions which maintained their ground in Egypt, and spread to other countries, were: That of Osiris and Isis, which was carried to Rome, but became so corrupt that its rites were forbidden by the government; and the worship of the golden calf, which was planted in Israel at the division of the kingdom, and flourished for about two hundred years. Whatever may have been the purity or strength of early monotheism in Egypt, it was lost in the ocean of polytheism and idolatry—carried down by the torrent of superstitious fears, as the receding tide carries down with it objects reached at its flood.

In Greece, though a few philosophers expressed a belief in one God only, the creator of all things, these expressions made no impression on the multitude. They fell as snowflakes fall on the surface of a lake and are seen no more.

The fact is quite noticeable that, where a religion more elevated than that held by the greater part of idolaters gained a foothold through the influence of some religious or philosophical

genius, the people, after the death of this religious teacher, receded from the position in which he had left them. What we see in the Old Testament is the reverse of this. The people, though strongly inclined to idolatry during the life-time of Moses and at his death, under the influence of those educating appliances whose relics are still found in the Old Testament advanced, notwithstanding repeated backslidings, until "they were a living protest against superstition and religious materialism;" and the conception of God so established has since been maintained wherever the Jewish, Mohammedan, or Christian religion has been received.

The language of certain writers, quoted near the beginning of this chapter, leaves us under the impression that idolatry is done away, and the worship of one supreme and infinite Spirit established, by an increase of general knowledge. It is probably true that general enlightenment assists in removing superstition and gaining more elevated religious views; but no nation or people appears by this means alone to have passed from idolatry to the worship of one supreme and infinite Spirit.

Phœnicia, Greece, and Rome were intelligent; but these were far from being free from idolatry. The Parthenon at Athens and the Pantheon at Rome were well filled with gods at the introduction of Christianity. At Athens, Paul's "spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

That we may have a nearer view of the passage before quoted from Colonel Ingersoll, I will repeat it here: "The savage, as he emerges from a state of barbarism, gradually loses faith in his idols of wood and stone, and in their place puts a multitude of spirits. As he advances in knowledge he generally discards the petty spirits, and in their stead believes in one whom he supposes to be infinite and supreme."

A valiant knight, who for many years has stood before the Old Testament with gleaming sword and threatening mien, will ask no help from the Old Testament in making this assertion good. Reference must be had to nations and people entirely beyond the influence of the Old Testament. To give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name is the work of the poet; and I do not know that Colonel

Ingersoll has ever invoked the muses. Yet we are in urgent need of the local habitation and the name. Where is the nation or people which, under the advancement of knowledge alone, has taken the course pointed out in this passage? and what is its name? I do not say that the assertion is literally false; though, for any fact I can now recall to the contrary, it virtually is so, because it ignores the influence of the Old Testament in bringing about this result. For, beyond the influence of the Old Testament, it does not appear that there is any nation or people in the world that has taken this course, nor that there ever was one that took it.

The few expressions of elevated religious views which may be pointed out in ancient history can scarcely be considered as resulting from the kind of advancement specified in this quotation; while the inability of the people to maintain those views shows the need of the course of training received by the Jews. The distinguishing merit of the Old Testament is in those special provisions which gave to the world the steady sunlight of monotheism, instead of the meteoric flashes which have at



great intervals, for a moment, relieved the long night of heathenism.

The character of the argument presented in these chapters will excuse me from asserting that Moses could not have foreseen the need of a special course of training, and provided for it; but the fact that the needed course of training is found nowhere except in the Old Testament accords well with the claim there put forth, that superhuman aid was received.

6. The author of the scheme for the elimination of idolatry appears to have been acquainted with certain facts in relation to education which are apt to be looked upon as modern discoveries. It is probable that no radical and permanent change in the type of civilization of a people takes place without a corresponding change in the organization of that people, which requires a lapse of time.

The Smithsonian Report, for 1864, contains an account of certain European skulls taken from a cemetery in which they had been buried a thousand years or more. After comparing these ancient skulls with the skulls of the descendants of the same people, still living in

the vicinity, the writer says: "We have here, then, a population in which we may remark that notwithstanding the persistence of certain types, civilization has had for its result a sensible modification of the brain in an ascending scale, a direction in which progress is always slower than in the opposite one of degradation."

Though Moses intimates the coming of a great prophet who would at some future period lead God's people, and though a later prophet expressly states that the Messiah at his coming would cause the offering of sacrifices to cease, yet it is apparent that Moses expected the institutions established by him to be of long continuance in their operations. This appears not only in the elaborate character of these institutions, given at the founding of a nation, but also in his language addressed to the people, in which he speaks of events which should happen when they should have been long in the land which was given them. As a matter of fact the space between Moses and Christ is sufficient, as generations are estimated, for a succession of forty-five generations. While these were passing not only were line upon

line and precept upon precept given, but there was a sifting of the people which kept those most inclined to the worship of the true God and dropped the others, as well as a rigid prohibition of intermarriage with idolaters till those generations appeared which could stand "as a living protest against superstition." The need of this lapse of time seems to have been understood by the author of the scheme for the elimination of idolatry.

7. It will appear, I think, to those who study the subject most carefully, that the establishment of Christianity is the culmination of one general plan that runs through the Bible. But without insisting on this, at this point, if we consider merely the minuteness and the multitude of the provisions made to check and prevent idolatry, the length of time during which labor was assiduously kept up under the instructions delivered by Moses, the great importance of deliverance from polytheism and idolatry, and the great extent to which the views then established have since spread, as they were expected by Jewish prophets to spread, it will perhaps appear to many, as it appears to me, that the scheme we have had

under consideration outmeasures the schemes of men. If this scheme is of merely human origin I know of no other that can be compared with it.

8. The general plan of the argument had before been so fully stated, and the connection between the Old Testament and the New is so close, that it has not appeared necessary specially to point out the bearing of the preceding paragraphs on the truthfulness of the New Testament writers. The bearing, however, of the remarks in this final division of this chapter will be more direct and more apparent. We here take our first look at a fact which will be more fully viewed in later chapters. In adopting that view of the life of Jesus, and the origin of Christianity of which Rénan is a prominent representative, and which is largely held by those who reject the supernatural, enough must be attributed to good fortune to outrage our ideas of probability, and to render that view quite untenable.

At the period of the life of Jesus, the Jews and such of their neighbors as had been influenced by them, differed radically from all other nations of that period in regard to the relig-

ious ideas in their possession. The ideas in regard to which they differed from other people were chiefly two. One of these, their conception of God and his worship, has been sufficiently specified. The other idea had the form of an anticipation, an expectation of the immediate coming of a great teacher and leader, the Messiah.

Though the leaders and rulers of the Jewish nation rejected Jesus, these ideas were the soil in which Christianity was planted, in which it took root as a stem of corn roots itself in the soil of a carefully prepared field, and from which it has grown to its present proportions. Soon after the death of Jesus we find the disciples appealing to the Scriptures and convincing men that Jesus was very Christ. Paul, though understood to be especially the apostle to the Gentiles, was accustomed, on passing from city to city, to seek the Jewish synagogue, where men and women imbued with the religious ideas I have mentioned were wont to assemble. At these points the seed of the Gospel was planted, and from these it was disseminated to the neighboring Gentiles.

Did Jesus by mere chance find a soil in this

state of fitness to receive the seed of Christianity?

Turning to the Old Testament we find there the minutes of a work of education and training, which, to count only from the time of Moses, was in operation for a period of fifteen hundred years. In these minutes we trace the distinct outlines of two great schemes adapted to develop just the two ideas we have under consideration. Moses, and those who followed him, working under the institutions established by him to eliminate idolatry, appear to have understood that their work, however faithfully and successfully done, would not be complete in itself, but that they should be followed by a Leader capable of conducting the people to greater heights. Accordingly, while they labored with one hand to eliminate idolatry, they labored with the other to build up the expectation of the Messiah.

One of these schemes we have had under consideration. Of the other only the briefest outline will be given here.

If we ask ourselves how that confident expectation of the Messiah came to be in existence at the period of the life of Jesus, the

answer readily suggested is, that it was confidence in the prophecies concerning the Messiah. But how came there to be confidence in those prophecies? If one of our neighbors should predict that in Rochelle seven hundred years from this date an extraordinary personage, with supernatural powers, would appear, and should give us a statement of details concerning his life, death, and burial, and should describe the influence that would be exerted by him on later generations, that prophecy would excite no expectation that the event would take place. The prophecy itself would be looked upon as a freak of insanity. There was, however, an expectation of the Messiah in the minds of all classes which appears to have been immovable. The difficulty was anticipated by Moses. It occurred to him that men might prophesy presumptuously even in the name of the Lord; talking of things they knew nothing about. Having warned the people against false prophets, he adds: "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which

the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

There were, then, to be prophecies of such nature that the people could see their fulfillment, and judge of the powers of the prophet. When these words were uttered prophecies were being fulfilled before the eyes of the Hebrew people. By prophetic promise they were to possess the land on which they were then just entering.

I will select an illustration of this point from a later period. During the siege and famine of Samaria, Elisha predicted, in circumstances of the greatest improbability, that on the morrow food would be plenty. The fulfillment of this prophecy was seen by the people, in circumstances that could not be forgotten.

Prophecies requiring speedy fulfillment are mingled with those which pertain to the Messiah.

The use made of the confidence so gained may be seen in the ninth verse of the forty-second chapter of Isaiah: "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I



declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." Having made this appeal to former fulfillments, the prophet sweeps out into an exultant song and prophecy concerning the expected Messiah and the extent of his kingdom. The fulfillment of prophecies of one class is presented as a reason for believing those of the other.

In these facts we find provision made for the gradual development of a confidence in prophecy which came at length to be a universal and unvarying expectation of the Messiah.

Our theme in this and the preceding chapter has been a scheme for the elimination of idolatry, and this seeming digression from that theme has been made merely that we might see the association of that scheme with another, a parallel scheme, extending alongside of it through all the centuries of the training and development we have been considering. This parallel scheme gains interest, as well as evidence of design, from the fact that it pertains to a higher development of religion, which under the coming great teacher should supplement, or complete, the work

which the prophets had immediately in hand in their contest with idolatry. The two schemes seem to be different aspects of one great plan aiming to lead men to an intelligent worship of God.

It is quite improbable that an aspirant for the position of founder of a great religion, impelled by either ambition or enthusiasm, should fall heir to the fruits of one great scheme which by some strange chance had been for centuries preparing for him; but it is much more improbable that he should fall heir to the fruits of two such schemes.

We are pressed by these facts towards the conviction that Jesus was not an impostor, an enthusiast, nor a merely human religious teacher of high native powers, luckily born at the right time and place for the introduction of a new religion; but that the preparation of the soil, the plowing, the harrowing, and the planting of the seed were all parts of one great scheme, progressing under the superintendence of one great mind which saw the end from the beginning.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IF I were to characterize the Old Testament fully and justly, I should not only dwell upon its leading purpose, but should point out other admirable features, such as its requirement of justice between man and man, its examples of high personal character in a dark age, and its hymns of lofty devotion to God, as well as attempt explanations of its difficulties. I shall not, however, characterize the Old Testament fully, nor quite justly, in this chapter; but shall confine myself to what have been deemed its darker features, making this the only chapter of the course that will be entirely defensive.

The objection to the Old Testament most frequently urged is, the severity of the Jewish wars. The Christian is ready to admit that an explanation is appropriate. A suggestion frequently used in explanation of the severe

orders given by God in these wars, that by earthquakes and other calamities God permits all classes to be destroyed, though not without value on certain accounts, should be accompanied by a statement of the circumstances of those wars. An appeal to the analogy of nature, though of much force when addressed to an age inclined to deism, is of little force when addressed to an age inclined to reject both the God of revelation and the God of nature. And this analogy, without a statement of circumstances, fails to explain an apparent discrepancy between the Old Testament and the New. The Jewish wars were, by God's command, wars of extermination. The Gospel deprecates all wars. If the circumstances do not justify, then the approval of the Christian must be withheld from orders represented to have been given by God. And yet God may be just, though we fail to state all the justifying circumstances. It is God that is omniscient, not the Christian; and the age from which we must gather the circumstances is not only distant, but dark. As we take up the subject we go backward at a single stride three thousand years into barbarism.

Before entering fully upon a defense of God's participation in those wars, it may be appropriate to devote a thought to the light in which God's relation to them should be viewed.

There are some readers critically inclined, and many more persons who have heard something of the severity of those wars, but have not carefully read, except a few passages taken from their proper connections, who suppose that the Jews did certain severe and cruel acts, and then represented God as approving those acts. It appears to these persons that, if this representation is to be accepted, they must differ decidedly from God's judgment as to what is right and what is wrong. There is a mistake in this view of the subject which leaves an unfortunate impression on the mind. In the Old Testament narrative God does not appear as the approving historian of acts voluntarily performed by a certain race, but as the commander-in-chief, who even in his severity may have had a benign purpose. He is also the rightful ruler and judge of those on whom this severity fell as a punishment.

It will perhaps relieve us of an idea of

partiality towards a particular people to remember that, first and last, punishments of like severity were inflicted on the Jews as on the neighboring tribes and nations. It will also be well to remember that the sufferings which in the Bible narrative appear as punishments for sins, resemble the sufferings which in other histories appear as the results of national degradation and sins. Among these preliminary remarks it will be appropriate to place a statement of the fact that though a particular race was used as a means in unfolding a religion, when that religion was fully unfolded it was adapted to the wants of all mankind, and was sent forth to all the world without restriction. It may further be well to state that it is the character of God as seen in the Old Testament, and not the character of the people, that the Christian undertakes to defend. There are narratives in the Old Testament which reflect the barbarism of the age in which the Old Testament course of training was conducted, but which do not inform us as to God's approval or disapproval of the events so narrated. The taunt that our religion in part descended to us from an age of barbar-

ism, instead of annoying the Christian, conveys a fact which he will desire to have made at least so conspicuous that a middle-aged man can see it with the naked eye.

The study of the Old Testament has been pursued with the following questions in mind:

1. Is there in the Old Testament an outline of a scheme for the accomplishment of an important end—an end of such importance as to furnish an explanation of God's taking a special course in the first establishment and later history of a particular nation; and was that end accomplished?

2. Could this scheme have been set on foot, and maintained without the severity which appears in the Old Testament?

3. If it could not, was it best that God should set this scheme on foot; and could he do so without injustice?

My answer to the first of these questions, that in relation to the outline of a scheme and the accomplishment of an end, is contained in the two preceding chapters.

Could this scheme have been set on foot and maintained without the severity which appears in the Old Testament? The influence

which suggests itself as appropriate when we think of leading a people away from superstition is reason. Moses should have reasoned with the people. And so he did. His writings taught them of the Maker of all things, and that Maker's right to their allegiance. He reasoned with them of a Being who, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, had brought them forth out of Egypt. But, while Moses reasoned, the people had arrangements more convenient than any thing Moses seemed inclined to teach them. They had gods in their pockets, carried perhaps as a potato is sometimes carried to drive away rheumatism, or wrapped in the folds of their garments, or hid away in their tents, which they could draw out and worship at their convenience. They were at least charged with secretly worshipping idols, while they openly gave their allegiance to Jehovah.

Let this hint of the difficulties in the way of establishing the scheme discovered in the Old Testament introduce a few words upon the probable position of the Jews, and those by whom they were surrounded, in the scale of civilization. The people of Egypt were



divided into four classes. The lowest of these was composed of herdsmen. The social position of the herdsmen, or shepherds, is indicated in the language of Joseph to his brethren: "For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." In this lowest class the children of Israel took their position on entering Egypt. Though kindly treated at first, their position grew more irksome, and at the end of their four hundred years' sojourn in Egypt they bowed under the burdens of the severest servitude. While so depressed and degraded by servitude, the sensuous, material religion of their masters continually appealed to their superstition. The effects of this experience were apparent after the Israelites emerged from their Egyptian bondage.

We gain some insight into their condition on reading the language which Moses addressed to them. Language which good taste forbids us to repeat was doubtless not only in good taste when addressed by Moses to his brethren, but conveyed to them the warnings which their condition demanded. There are passages in the addresses of Moses which were not certainly addressed to beasts, but which could

have been addressed with propriety only to beastly men. And yet the tone of earnest solicitation in which these addresses are given betrays the apprehension in the mind of Moses that his brethren were just ready to plunge into the vices against which he warns them. These warnings are also coupled with the strongest possible intimations that the surrounding nations were weltering in the depths of a degradation above which the Jews were still in part sustained.

“Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) that the land spew not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you.”

The book of Judges recites the doings of a

savage people in a barbarous age. The writer says: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." That is, every man did as he chose till some outbreking violence stirred the sea of passions and brought violent retribution. In the tribe of Benjamin an outrage was committed, the details of which I need not recite. The husband of the outraged and murdered woman took her dead body, and cutting it into twelve pieces, sent a piece to each of the twelve tribes, with a recital of the outrage. Three successive bloody battles followed, and the tribe of Benjamin was nearly exterminated. But then a revulsion of feeling set in, and the people "lifted up their voices and wept sore; and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?" They give their counsel as to the best method of rebuilding the tribe of Benjamin; and then follow scenes of wife-stealing, precisely analogous to the wife-stealing scenes which occur in modern times among barbarous tribes.

The continuous record of the Jewish nation, from its establishment to its overthrow, fur-

nishes an explanation of the Old Testament severities, and at the same time shows us the material out of which the Old Testament course of training made that people, which at length stood, alone in all the world, "a living protest against superstition."

An army officer, a few years ago, published a book, giving his view of the Indians and the western border difficulties. His statement was in substance this: The civilized man has many influences. He has conscience, and religion, and honesty, and honor, and prudence. The Indian has but one, and that one is fear. Fear, probably, was not the only line along which the mind of the early Jew could be approached; but those higher avenues through which the mind of the civilized man is approached were nearly closed. Fear was used as an influence in this way: The Jews were commanded to execute the punishment claimed to be due to the nations that were driven out; and taught that for like offenses like punishments would fall on them; that for like degradation the land would spew them out as it spewed out the nations that were before them. The tendency to idolatry, which the institutions of Moses

were designed to correct, was largely due to fear. The gods of the surrounding nations were believed to be able to inflict dire calamities, or, on the other hand, to deliver from them. This fear could perhaps be best met with fear, as fire is fought with fire.

In considering whether the scheme for the elimination of idolatry could have been set on foot and maintained without the Old Testament severity, it will be helpful to read Moses's statement of the reason why this course was required, and then a few passages of later history which seem to show the necessity for the requirement.

The statement of Moses may be taken from Deuteronomy vii: "When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew

mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."

But little comment on my part will be required in showing the Old Testament view of the necessity for this severity in repressing the idolatry of the surrounding nations, which was continually pressing in upon the Jews.

Judges ii, 7 to 13: "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten

years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the Mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth."

This relapse into idolatry is represented as resulting in part from failure fully to drive out the people who were to be expelled, some of them being permitted to dwell among the Israelites.

None of the requirements of the Jewish law were more strict than those which pertained to intermarriage with the people of surrounding nations; and the severities complained of by unbelievers were chiefly de-

signed to prevent leagues and marriages with surrounding nations. The Bible history, after dwelling on the prosperity that attended the faithful maintenance of monotheism through the reign of David and the earlier portions of the reign of Solomon, adds:

“But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the



Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods."

Allusions to David like those in this passage produce an unfavorable prejudice, which it will be well to remove in passing. The sins of David are sharply rebuked at appropriate times; but through all his career his allegiance to the true God was unswerving, and unmixed with the worship of the gods of surrounding nations. It is in this respect that he is held up as a pattern for later kings. None of his children were thrown into the fire to appease Molech, as some of the children of Solomon quite possibly were.

During the reign of David and the earlier portions of the reign of Solomon, the true worship had seemed so established that intercourse and intermarriage with other nations might be freely allowed; but the marriages of Solomon show that the true worship was not so established as to sanction that course.

1 Kings xvi: "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat [that is, as if it had been a light thing for him to maintain the worship of the golden calves which Jeroboam had set up about fifty years before, at the dividing of the kingdom], that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."

This Phœnician woman, Jezebel, became a power in the land for wickedness, her husband becoming a mere puppet in her hand. It was when Jezebel had threatened the life of Elijah, and he had fled into the wilderness burdened with discouragement, that he said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain

thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." But he was mistaken. There were seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal nor kissed him. We get a hint of the kind of life these were leading, in an explanatory note concerning an officer of the king:

"Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly: for it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water."

The representatives of the true worship were in the wilderness, or under ground. This state of things had resulted from a disregard of one of the requirements which in the law of Moses had been coupled with the command to cut off and drive out the previous inhabitants of the land.

Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, married a prince of Judah, and carried the worship of Baal into the southern kingdom also.

The career of Ahaz, king of Judah, may be cited in illustration of the necessity for the severe orders given to the Jews in the law of

Moses, in several respects. No covenants, or leagues, were to be made with the heathen nations about them: yet "Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me." The help so gained not only cost the dismantling of the temple and the king's palace, but the alliance led to the introduction of new phases of idolatry. In this experience we see the need of the prohibition against covenants with the heathen.

The history of this king shows the operation of that fear which could perhaps only be checked by counteracting fear. "And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel." His history further illustrates the evils and sufferings from which a large part of mankind are now saved, as a result of the training given

to the early Jews. "For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abomination of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel."

One more point I wish to illustrate by means of the closing words of the passage just quoted. Similar words are used in various parts of the Old Testament in relation to the Jews: "After the abomination of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel." Some of these tribes and nations lingered on their borders, and kindred nations were near. Their influence was still great, but not what it would have been if they had been left to mingle freely with the children of Israel. If the Old Testament history teaches any thing, it teaches that in order to the establishment and maintenance of the scheme for the elimination of idolatry it was necessary that a certain spot of earth should be to a large extent wiped, and cleared of these abominations, "as a man wipeth a dish."

This fact will be more fully impressed on

our minds if we consider the time during which the struggle continued, and the slow progress made even with the severity used in repressing idolatry. The institutions of Moses designed to counteract idolatry had been in operation about seven hundred years at the time of Ahaz. About fifty years later we reach the reign of Manasseh. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove as did Ahab, king of Israel; and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made, in the

house, of which the Lord said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name forever: neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel."

In Ezekiel we have a vivid description of idolatries practiced in Jerusalem about nine hundred years after the law of Moses was given; but it will not be quoted because of the length to which this chapter is growing. Notwithstanding the obstinate perseverance of the Jews in idolatry, the law of Moses was not admitted to have been a failure. But on their restoration after the captivity the law in all its minutiae was the guide in re-establishing the nation; and this final struggle ushers in success.

The reading of so many passages from the Old Testament history may have been tedious;

but in these passages, and certainly in the entire history from which these are taken, it appears to me that we have a sufficient answer to the second of the questions proposed. The scheme for the elimination of idolatry could not have been set on foot and maintained without the severity which appears in the Old Testament.

3. Was it best that God should set this scheme on foot; and could he do so without injustice? In certain emergencies very severe orders have been best. During the anarchy of the French Revolution Napoleon ordered cannon to be stationed in the streets of Paris and fired upon the people. The order was severe; but in the state of things then existing it was best for Paris and best for France that the order should be given. During the riot in New York City, which began July 13, 1863, occasioned by the draft, the police and soldiers were ordered to fire upon the mob; and it is estimated that during the riot about one thousand persons were killed. In the accounts of the riot it was stated that some of the rioters had climbed to the roofs of buildings, and that when fired upon they slid from the roofs and fell on the pavement with



a dull heavy thud. The accounts were horrid. And yet when we consider the greater number of lives then exposed on the battle-field, and the danger in which the country itself was placed, we can only say that those severe orders were best.

Wherever the ancient world is looked in upon, the tendency to superstition, idolatry, and debasing modes of worship, appears as a murky current of sufficient force to bear down, and carry before it, all ordinary barriers. If idolatry was to be checked extraordinary means must be used.

Revolutions which overthrow beastly habits, long established superstitions, and firmly rooted prejudices, are seldom if ever effected painlessly. During the late war Whittier wrote:

“We wait beneath the furnace blast  
The pangs of transformation;  
Not painlessly doth God recast  
And mold anew the nation.

Hot burns the fire,  
Where wrongs expire;  
Nor spares the hand  
That from the land  
Uproots the ancient evil.

Before the joy of peace must come  
The pains of purifying.”

In considering whether it was best that God should set this scheme on foot, we can not wisely ignore the results that have followed; though we may not be able fully to estimate them, nor fully to separate them from the results of other influences. To the Christian it appears that the elimination of idolatry was the first step in the introduction of an intelligent worship of God; and this appears to him a matter above estimation. But on a lower plane we find facts which an unbeliever will be more likely to appreciate. Hume, on recounting the degradation and sufferings of the people of ancient nations, says that on the account of humanity one could wish the wish of Caligula, that the people had but one neck that they might be finished at a single blow. The sufferings which result from superstitious fears are still felt among the heathen; and human life is frequently destroyed on account of witchcraft. Nor have we any good reason to assert, with much assurance, that without the influence of the Old Testament training we should be less likely than Solomon to practice the horrid rites of Molech. Without entering into a minute comparison of heathen-

ism with Christianity, it will not be extravagant to assert that men are saved from more suffering and discomfort during a modern century—probably during a modern decade—as a result of the Old Testament scheme, than were caused by the severities through which it was established.

The benefits of a Christian civilization are not merely in its averting evils, but also in its bringing positive advantages. The fact that inventions made “for the use of man” are extending from us towards the heathen, and not coming from them towards us, has been mentioned; but it should be considered in this connection as among the facts which justify the steps taken to remove idolatry.

Could God set this scheme on foot without injustice? A father has the right to govern his children. It is a right which another man may not presume to exercise. This is his prerogative. The chief executive of a nation has certain rights which he may exercise in the government of the people, and which another man may not presume to exercise. These are his prerogatives. The Creator has certain rights which he may exercise in the govern-

ment of created beings, and which no other may exercise. These are his prerogatives. God's prerogatives as the creator and governor of the world separate him so widely from the position of men that the charge of injustice should be made only with great caution. Some of the facts affecting the justice or injustice of God's acts may lie beyond our reach.

The punishments inflicted on the Canaanites differed from the punishments which have fallen on corrupt tribes and nations throughout the world's history only in the fact that they were inflicted at the direct command of God. If those commands were from God, so also were the statements which accompanied them, that those people deserved the punishment they received. How shall we know that those statements were not true? Until we know that they are untrue, we can draw no argument of any force against the Bible from the mere fact that the Canaanites were destroyed or driven out. That the nations driven out were corrupt we can not doubt. Just what their responsibility for being in this condition was, it is not so easy for us to de-

termine. The book of Job, representing an earlier period, displays a better state of society—a light sufficient, if well used, to have led to something better than the human sacrifices and the beastly practices of the Canaanites of the days of Moses.

But what shall be said of the children who suffered in the overthrow of those nations? Just what is said of the generation now growing up in poverty at the South, as a result of the punishments inflicted on that section by the general government, and just what is said of those who suffer by earthquakes and other calamities, whatever that may be. In the mind of one man these facts will argue that there is no God; in the mind of another they will point to a future state. The Being who commanded the invasion of Canaan, and whose eye swept down the line of generations to the redemption of man and to the incoming of a higher and better civilization, also held in his hand the resources of another state of being. It is quite too much for me, from my standpoint, to assert that God has done injustice to any. I can not know that the assertion is true; nor can any one who bases his rejection

of Christianity on the severity of the Jewish wars.

The circumstances stated in this chapter have been presented to show why God might command a course apparently at variance with the sentiments of the New Testament. It will also be well to notice that war is deprecated in the Old Testament, as well as in the New. David was commended for having thought to build the temple, but was forbidden to build it because he had been a man of war and had shed blood. Isaiah prophesied of the expected Messiah as the Prince of Peace, and looked forward to a time when swords should be beaten into plowshares, and men should learn war no more.

The means by which preparation was made for the coming of Christ probably passed before Elijah, while lodged in the cave at Horeb, in a panorama of symbols, when it is said: "And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire;

but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave."

Elijah had fought the enemies of the true religion with fire and sword; and now, having fled from the fury of an idolatrous court, and lain down exhausted, God teaches his servant, if the view of the believer is correct, that he should ultimately show himself to the world in the use of entirely different and altogether peaceful means. If it should appear to my unbelieving friends that the vision of Elijah was a dream with which God had nothing to do, I shall not be at all annoyed by that view of it; but I shall be pleased if the fact should be recognized, that we have here a beautiful picture of what actually happened in Jewish history, including the coming of Christ.

There is an analogy between the convulsions of nature which preceded the coming of man, an intellectual and moral being, made in the image of his Maker, and the convulsions of society which preceded the coming of Christ. Hugh Miller, in speaking of the revolutions

which preceded the introduction of man, says: "Now, a partially consolidated planet, tempested by frequent earthquakes, of such terrible potency that those of the historic ages would be but mere ripples of the earth's surface in comparison, could be no proper home for a creature so constituted. . . . The reasoning brain would have been wholly at fault in a scene of things in which it could neither foresee the exterminating calamity while yet distant nor control it when it had come; and so the reasoning brain was not produced until the scene had undergone a slow but thorough process of change, during which at each progressive stage it had furnished a platform for higher and still higher life. When the coniferæ could flourish on the land, and fishes subsist in the seas, fishes and cone-bearing plants were created; when the earth became a fit habitat for reptiles and birds, reptiles and birds were produced; with the dawn of a more stable and mature state of things the sagacious quadruped was ushered in; and, last of all, when man's house was fully prepared for him—when the data on which it is his nature to reason and calculate



had become fixed and certain—the reasoning, calculating brain was molded by the creative finger, and man became a living soul. Such seems to be the true reading of the wondrous inscription chiseled deep in the rocks.”

Convulsions like these rent and heaved the crust of primeval society; but God was not in the convulsions, except to guide the forces in the preparation for something better.

“ At last, a voice all still and small  
 Rose sweetly on the ear;  
 Yet rose so shrill and clear that all  
 In heaven and earth might hear;  
 It spoke of peace, it spoke of love,  
 It spoke as angels speak above;  
 And God himself was there.”

—*Thomas Campbell.*

It is a matter of interest to learn in what light Jesus viewed the religious teachers of the Old Testament. Their prophecies were being fulfilled; their sincerity was at least implied; but the imperfection of their view of spiritual things is also asserted. John the Baptist's disciples having come to Jesus asking, “Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?” being informed, and having departed, Jesus said to the multitude, “What

went ye out into the wilderness to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it was written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The connection shows that the kingdom of heaven here referred to is the Christian dispensation, at that time being unfolded. The purport of the passage seems to be that the least, in the new dispensation, would be able to get clearer views—better conceptions of religion—than the greatest in the old. The contrast is placed in a strong light.

Again he says to those about him, "Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

The Jews appear to have been fed as fast as they were prepared to digest—taught as fast as they were prepared to practice. Paul

calls the provisions of the law "beggarly elements"—beggarly, or meager in instruction, as compared with Christianity; elements like the elementary matter prepared for children.

The system of religion more directly addressed to us is contained in the New Testament. Viewed through the New Testament, the Old Testament furnishes evidence to the advocate, and illustration to the teacher, of Christianity. The germs of Christian doctrines are found in the Old Testament; but the germ imbedded in the acorn is not to be mistaken for the oak in the forest. The preliminary training was necessarily local. The commission to the Christian Church is, "Go ye into all the world and preach"—not the ceremonies of the law—not the severities required to repress idolatry—much less the appetites and passions of a half-civilized people—but, "Go ye into all the world and *preach the Gospel*."

It has been my purpose to take up several particular passages of the Old Testament; but within such limits as will be sufferable for this chapter, I can only speak briefly of one.

Objection has been made to the words, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the

children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." There are well known ways in which children suffer for the sins of their fathers, which may furnish a part of the explanation. The children of debauched and degenerate parents fail to receive the protection, care, and education which is their natural right. They also inherit weaknesses entailed by such parents. But the explanation should perhaps be chiefly drawn from the language with which these words stand immediately connected, and from language elsewhere used in the Old Testament. The commandment to which these words are appended prohibits the making and worshiping of images; and the words we are considering, introduced by, "I am a jealous God," and closing with, "them that hate me," evidently have special reference to sins of this class.

It appears that various types of idolatry bore the names of the men who introduced them. At the dividing of the kingdom Jeroboam, son of Nebat, set up two golden calves, one in Bethel and one in Dan. The worship of these calves continued during the existence of the northern kingdom—about two hundred

and fifty years—and in the history of that period it uniformly bears the name of “the sin of Jeroboam, son of Nebat.” This sin was visited upon his son, and upon his successors, not merely because the father and the founder of the nation committed this sin, and gave it his name, but because these “walked in the ways of Jeroboam, son of Nebat,” and committed the same sin.

In the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel we read: “What mean ye that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die. . . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

In closing this discussion of the purpose and character of the Old Testament, which

has now extended through three chapters, I will add a word upon the manner in which the Old Testament is read by different persons. The critical have looked for mistakes—for indications of ignorance and weakness. The only effect upon the believer that could be expected from pointing out these, would be some modification of his view of the inspiration of the Old Testament writers. For, while the general purpose of the Old Testament is conspicuous on the face of that collection of writings, its bearing on the truth of the statements made by the New Testament writers will always be the same—always favorable, and always important. One man looks into this sacred book for indications of human ignorance and weakness; another looks into this history of a human race to find mingled with it indications of superhuman wisdom and forethought. Both find what they look for.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE EXISTENCE OF PROPHECY AS A FACT OF  
HISTORY, SHOWN IN THE EXPERIENCE  
OF CITIES AND NATIONS.

MANY, on hearing the prophets mentioned as persons who foretold events, associate them with fortune-tellers. These, if they study the fulfillment of the prophecies at all, do so under the influence of an unfavorable, and unfortunate, prejudice. Fortune-tellers degrade men. The prophets elevated those who were influenced by them. Fortune-tellers lead men into superstition. The prophets were the chief human agencies in executing that scheme whose outlines we have traced, and which eclipses every other scheme, or work, in saving men from superstition—that by which idolatry was destroyed—and it does not diminish our respect for prophecy to find that prophecy itself was among the means employed.

The fact that dreams were made the channel

through which a few of the prophecies were uttered, leaves on some minds the impression that the prophecies are a collection of clouds floating over some dream-land. It was the work of the prophets not merely to utter prophecies which should have an influence when fulfilled at a later period, but also to exert an influence in their own day in favor of the true religion. Though our concern is with fulfillment, which must be our test of the existence of prophecy as a fact of history, yet on account of the prejudices with which we may approach that subject, it will be well to inquire whether in the two leading instances in which dreams became the channel of prophecy, there were not circumstances affecting the immediate influence of the prophet which determined the use of that channel. Joseph and Daniel were worshipers of Jehovah at idolatrous courts. They were also, at their respective periods, the leading representatives of the true worship in the world, that worship being then at a low ebb. Through a superstitious regard for dreams already existing at the courts of Egypt and Babylon, and on account of the prominence given to a class of persons believed to be able



to interpret dreams, Joseph and Daniel, representatives of the true religion, were raised to positions of prominence and influence at their respective courts. No use is at present to be made of prophecies uttered in this way, but these remarks are made on account of the influence of association.

The consideration which should affect our feelings towards the prophecies more than any other, is the relation they sustain to great events in the world's history. Allusion has been made to the great figure which, in the view of unbelievers, is made in the world's history by Jesus, who, in his person and in the work performed by him, claimed to fulfill an important portion of the prophecies. This point will be more definitely presented in the closing chapter of this course. The association of the prophecies with the destruction of idolatry and with the work performed by Jesus, places them quite above the range of contemptuous remarks in regard to them.

In presenting collateral support to the New Testament history more time will be devoted to prophecies pertaining to the Messiah than to others; but the fulfillments seen in the

histories of cities and nations continue to exert an influence analogous to the influence which built up the expectation of the Messiah—they are fulfillments which display the prophetic powers of the men who predicted the Messiah.

Events belonging to three classes, all claimed to be fulfillments, demand our attention: those which are recorded in the Bible, those recorded in profane history, and those which may be verified by modern observation. Each of these classes of events will receive some attention in this chapter.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia.”

These words introduce the account of those very important events which furnish either the theme or the suggestion of the greater part of the later writings of the Old Testament, whether historical or prophetic—the return of the Jews from Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the

re-establishment of the nation. The temple, though repaired in the interval, and the city continued down to the destruction by Titus, as witnesses which, if they could say nothing of the entire accuracy of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, gave silent testimony to the fact of the rebuilding. The events were of such character, of such general notoriety, and so fully involving the interests of individuals, that no nation so anxious as the Jews were in regard to the preservation of their history and their genealogies could be deceived, or could fall into error touching the general statements and dates of the account. The prophecy of Jeremiah referred to by Ezra was uttered in the midst of events of like general notoriety, and involving the interests of individuals in a still more exciting way, during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, at the close of which the mass of the people were carried away into captivity and the temple and city destroyed. Even in our day the matter, the style, and the language of the writings made "by the rivers of Babylon" testify to the fact of the captivity. Jewish history would scarcely be more likely to err in regard to the

general facts and date of that siege than in regard to the events recorded by Ezra.

In the Jewish economy the prophet was a counselor of state. If his position was not analogous to that of a cabinet minister, it was quite as conspicuous and as intimately connected with the policy of the government. Those chapters of the prophecy of Jeremiah which pertain to the siege, the captivity, and the restoration are in reality a history of the utterance of the prophecies, which gives with minuteness the circumstances in which the utterances were made, and dwells upon the treatment received by the prophet from the hands of those in power, who believed his prophecies and his counsels to be a hinderance to the prosecution of the war. The history of the utterance of the particular prophecies referred to by Ezra is so interwoven with the history of the siege, and the conflict of the policy of Jeremiah with that of the princes of Judah was so sharp, that it does not appear at all probable, if it is possible, that any mistake or fraud existed in the time of Ezra in regard to the time when the utterances were made.

About B. C. 600 the armies of Nebuchad-

nezzar, the most powerful of the Babylonian kings, swept over Western Asia, bringing the small kingdoms of that region into subjection. These subjected kingdoms were continually inclined to revolt, and yet unable to free themselves from the yoke of Babylon.

Jerusalem was three times taken by Nebuchadnezzar: in the years B. C. 607, 597, and 586. At the second siege many prominent citizens were carried into captivity, including the king, Jehoiakin, or Jeconiah, in whose stead Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah. The revolt into which Zedekiah appears to have been pressed by the nobles or princes of Judah led to the entire destruction of the city and temple and the captivity of the people. The hope which inspired this revolt was a reliance on the assistance of Egypt. Jeremiah maintained that the only way of safety lay in accepting the supremacy of the Chaldeans.

During the year preceding the first of the sieges just mentioned Jeremiah prophesied: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Because ye have not heard my words, behold I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of

Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations."

After the second siege, at which the king and prominent citizens, and a part of the furniture of the temple, were carried away, Jeremiah counseled Zedekiah to submit to the supremacy of Babylon, saying: "Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence?" Then there appeared men, apparently encouraged and

brought forward by the party which relied on the assistance of Egypt, who claimed to be authorized to proclaim a brighter prospect in the immediate future; especially Hananiah, who prophesied that within two years the king, the captives, and vessels which had been taken from the temple, should be restored. Jeremiah said, "The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest the people to trust in a lie." Pretended prophets having also appeared with like statements among the captives at Babylon, Jeremiah sent to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away a letter, of which the following words are parts:

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; . . . and seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. . . . Let not your prophets and your diviners that be in the midst of you deceive you; neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord.

For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place."

The final siege being for a short time raised on account of the approach of an Egyptian army, Jeremiah attempted to escape out of the city, but was met by an officer stationed at the gate, who said: "Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans. Then said Jeremiah, It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans." The prophet was, however, placed in prison.

When he had been many days in prison the king asked him, secretly: "Is there any word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, There is; for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Moreover Jeremiah said unto King Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?"

The prophecies and the counsels of Jeremiah continuing to be of the same tenor, and



he having in particular said that those who should go forth to the Chaldeans would save their lives by so doing, "the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them." The king granted the princes permission to do as they chose with Jeremiah, and they let him down with cords into a dungeon; "and in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." A friend of the prophet bringing the king word of what had been done, was permitted to take a force of thirty men and draw him out again and place him in more comfortable quarters, but still in confinement.

While he was confined in the court of the prison in the king's house, his cousin from a region near Jerusalem came into the prison, anxious to get rid of a piece of land. Believing the prophecies he had uttered in regard to a return at the end of seventy years, Jeremiah bought the land, taking evidence of the purchase, with the formality of the law and the customs, and making special provision that

these evidences should be carefully preserved. This transaction was mingled with prophecy. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." "Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken."

Through both these writings—that which gives the circumstances of the utterance of the prophecy, and that which gives the facts which show the fulfillment—are Jewish, and both parts of the Bible, yet the character of the writings, and the nature of the circumstances, are such as to make on the mind a strong impression that the events in both cases, including in the one case the utterance of the prophecy, occurred as stated, and at the times stated. So far as the reliability of these writings may be presumed upon, we have in these events evidence of the existence of prophecy.

Ezra, in introducing the proclamation of Cyrus, makes no mention of it as a fulfillment of a prophecy by Isaiah, nor of the influence of that prophecy in procuring the proclamation. It is introduced because of its relation

to the events about to be narrated, and as the natural introduction to them. It was the authority under which the Jews might proceed to build both temple and city without molestation from subordinate officers of the Persian Empire; and as such, a few years later, it became very important to them, when their right to rebuild a city which had before been rebellious was called in question. During the reign of Darius, search having been made, and a record of the proclamation of Cyrus having been found among the records of the empire, the Jews were not only permitted but assisted to complete the temple. Not only is there no appearance of intention on the part of Ezra to show this relation between prophecy and a proclamation, which he may be thought to have forged, but during his life-time it would not have been prudent to have published a pretended copy of a proclamation which in reality had never been issued, nor to misrepresent the character of one that had been issued; besides, the migration and the work which certainly took place, could not have taken place without authority in some form from the Persian Government, which con-

trolled all that region. Aside from a tradition among the Jews preserved by Josephus, that the prophecy was shown to Cyrus, the only intimation we have that the one writing had any influence in producing the other is derived from the fact that both are preserved in the Old Testament and may be compared.

Without bringing together the parallel passages of the two writings, I will quote portions of the prophecy, and so much of the first of Ezra as was taken from the proclamation, when the relation of the one writing to the other will be apparent:

“Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him. . . . The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. . . . And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayst know that I,

the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. . . . I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.” “Thus saith the Lord, . . . that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built: and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. . . . I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, said the Lord of hosts.”

There are many passages in the prophecy corresponding to the facts of the siege and overthrow of Babylon, which may have affected the mind of Cyrus, but these seem to have suggested the language of the proclamation: “Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the

God), which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."

The writing which appears to have suggested the language of this proclamation purports to have been written by Isaiah, at least one hundred and seventy-five years before the writing of the proclamation. It is professedly prophetic, and its fulfillment is to give it an important influence in furthering the work which appears to be the leading purpose of the Old Testament training—the work of overthrowing polytheism and idolatry. In its composition are interwoven passages like this: "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else."

The following points in regard to these writings are important to us:

There is great probability, in view of the circumstances, and of the manner in which it is used by Ezra (whose attention, so far as it

is given to prophecy at all, appears to be given to the fulfillment of another prophecy), that the proclamation, as we now have it, was issued by Cyrus. If it was issued by Cyrus, it is an indirect, but very practical, expression in regard to the prophecy, made by a king and commander of marked ability, having unlimited power over persons and writings in his realm, whose character is favorably represented in both sacred and profane history, who is the person directly addressed, and in whose career, in subduing other nations, and in taking Babylon, with the manner of its capture, the prophecy was to be fulfilled.

Though no mention is made of Isaiah in the proclamation, or in its connection, yet it indicates the opinion of Cyrus that the language we now have in Isaiah was, as it purported to be, a prophecy uttered at an earlier period, and fulfilled in the events of his career. He admits the authority of the charge given him to re-establish the worship of God at Jerusalem. According to the history, which proceeds from this introduction, Cyrus restored the vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple,

amounting to five thousand four hundred pieces, and entered into the enterprise of the Jews with an earnestness which extended its influence to later reigns; especially modifying that of his son-in-law, Darius, who a few years later came to the throne. The proclamation both shows the opinion of Cyrus and is itself a fulfillment of specifications in the prophecy.

In pointing out this indication of the opinion of Cyrus in regard to the age and character of the prophecy, I do not forget that in the age of Cyrus the intervention of gods of various ranks and orders was believed in upon less evidence than would now be required. But, when due allowance is made for this fact, we can not suppose that Cyrus left unused his opportunities for learning the history of the prophecy fulfilled in his own career, when on its account he reversed the policy pursued with other nations. Cræsus and his treasures were carried in the train of Cyrus from Asia Minor to Babylon.

The force of the argument drawn from prophecy will in many cases depend upon the assurance felt by the inquirer that the prophecy was uttered before the event it professes



to predict. The assurance of this fact is unlimited in all those cases in which the fulfillment is seen from a modern stand-point, and in all the fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies mentioned by New Testament writers. We shall soon proceed to prophecies of these classes; but in regard to fulfillments seen in the events of earlier history, whether sacred or profane, the date of the prophecy is in some instances the chief question. The effort made to show that the book of Daniel, which describes the invasion of Western Asia by a Grecian army, and the second part of Isaiah—from chapter xl to the close—which contains the prophecy concerning Cyrus, are of later date than they purport to be, is an admission of the force of the argument drawn from them if they retain the date usually assigned them.

I will state a few reasons for believing that the second part of Isaiah was written before the taking of Babylon, and by Isaiah:

1. The facts already stated in regard to the deference of Cyrus for this prophecy.

2. The second part has no separate inscription, but appears to be included in the general title to the prophecies of Isaiah given in the

first chapter. Though it contains, as do the earlier chapters also, prophecies concerning other nations and cities than Judah and Jerusalem, this is owing to their relation to these.

3. The second part sustains the relation to the first that should be expected if both were written by the same Jewish prophet. So far as the predictions touch upon the history of the Jews, they pass from the events which precede to those which follow the captivity, omitting those of the seventy years. Chapter xxxix contains a prediction of the carrying away to Babylon; chapter xl introduces a prophecy suggested by the restoration. The prophecies of Jeremiah and the historical writings of Ezra take the same course.

4. The style of the second part is the style of the first part, modified by the subjects treated, and perhaps by the time of life at which the writing was done. Characteristic expressions of the first part occur in the second: also modes of allusion and illustration in the two portions resemble each other more than could be expected if the writings were by different authors. Compare a few of these. In the thirteenth chapter it is said: "I have

commanded my sanctified ones;" sanctified being used in the sense of set apart for a special purpose. This is spoken of the nations selected for the overthrow of Babylon. In the forty-fifth chapter it is said, "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus." Anointed is here used in the sense of set apart for a special purpose. This is spoken to the commander who should lead the nations referred to in the other passage.

In the eleventh chapter are these words: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." In the sixty-fifth chapter are these: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not

hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

5. Certain expressions of Jeremiah, and his manner of treating certain subjects—specially the overthrow of Babylon—appear to have been suggested by the last part of Isaiah, indicating the existence of that writing in his day.

6. There is no known name of any other claimant of the second part of Isaiah, and both Jews and Christians have uniformly attributed it to the prophet whose name it bears.

To these should be added the general remark that changing the dates of writings of both Testaments is a method of attack tried at so many points as to show the motive of those who use it more plainly than any thing else. The writings of both Jews and Christians have been carefully preserved by men who were deeply interested in their reliability, and yet these men are supposed to be entirely in error in regard to the history of a large part of those writings.

If passages were taken only from Jeremiah and from that part of Isaiah which precedes the fortieth chapter to compare with the history of Babylon, the evidence of the existence

of prophecy so furnished would be strong; but there appears to be no reason to think passages from the second part of Isaiah less appropriate than the others.

The period of Isaiah's writing is determined by the title of his prophecy, "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah;" and by the fact that the history of many of the predictions is mingled with the history of the government, and of the nation in general, in a manner resembling that pointed out in the case of the predictions of Jeremiah. For instance: Hezekiah's having shown the messengers from Babylon his treasures, leads to the prediction by Isaiah, that the treasures laid up by the succession of previous kings, as well as the descendants of Hezekiah, should be carried to Babylon. The particular prophecy of Jeremiah from which passages will be taken is dated the fourth year of Hezekiah, with a statement of the circumstances of the writing. This date places it between the second and the third siege of Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

Herodotus says: "When Cyrus had reduced all the other parts of the continent, he attacked the Assyrians." Babylon was at that time the capital of Assyria. Each of the conquered kingdoms furnished its quota of soldiers to swell the army of Cyrus. The host brought before Babylon was an assemblage which Cyrus addressed, sometimes as Persians and allies, sometimes as Medes and allies, and sometimes as friends and allies. This state of things being foreseen gave to the prophecies concerning Babylon a feature which is not seen in the prophecies concerning other cities. Isaiah xiii begins as follows: "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, did see. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven,

even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land." Isaiah xxi: "A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam [the ancient name of Persia]; besiege O Media." The Persians, Medes, and allies, were guided into Babylon by Gobryas and Gadatas, who had deserted from the Babylonians and gone with their forces to the besieging army. Jeremiah li: "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Aschenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion."

In these passages are descriptions of the forces that should besiege Babylon quite different from any thing found in the prophecies of other cities, and quite different from indiscriminate dreaming. The name which the commander of this host bears in history is given in the second part of Isaiah, in passages quoted.

Xenophon says: "When Cyrus reached Babylon, he ranged his whole army round the city, and then rode round it himself, with his friends, and the principal men of the allies. When he had taken a view of the walls, he prepared to draw off the army from before the city; and a deserter coming off told him that they intended to fall upon him when he was leading the army away. 'For, as they surveyed it from the walls, said he, your line appeared to them to be but weak.'" They, however, forbore to fight. "When they had encamped, Cyrus summoned to him the principal officers, and said, Friends and allies, we have taken a view of the city round about, and I am unable to see how an enemy can take walls of such strength and height by assault. But the greater the number of men in the city is, so much the sooner [since they do not come out to fight] I conceive that they may be reduced by famine." Isaiah xiii: "Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid." Jeremiah 1, 42: "The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs



as of a woman in travail." Jer. li, 30: "The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women."

The allied army, having effected an entrance, made its attack within the walls of the city. "Cyrus sent troops of horse through the streets, bidding them kill those that they found abroad, and ordering some, who understood the Assyrian language, to tell those who were in the houses to remain within, and to say that if any were found abroad, they would be killed." (Xenophon.) Jeremiah li: "Surely I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars: and they shall lift up a shout against thee." Xenophon: "They that were with Gobryas joined in the shout with them, as if they were revelers themselves, and, marching in the shortest way they could, arrived at the palace." Jeremiah li: "Thus the slain fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they are thrust through in her streets."

That those who have not read the siege of Babylon, or have not given special attention to it, may have a more connected view, I will make two quotations a little more extended.

Herodotus: "Having stationed the bulk of his army near the passage of the river, where it enters Babylon, and again having stationed another division beyond the city, where the river makes its exit, he gave orders to his forces to enter the city as soon as they should see the stream fordable. Having thus stationed his forces, and given these directions, he himself marched away with the ineffective part of his army; and having come to the lake Cyrus did the same with respect to the river and the lake as the queen of the Babylonians had done; for having diverted the river by means of a canal into the lake, which was before a swamp, he made the ancient channel fordable by the sinking of the river. When this took place, the Persians who were appointed to that purpose close to the stream of the river, which had now subsided to about the middle of a man's thigh, entered Babylon by this passage. If, however, the Babylonians had been aware of it beforehand, or had known what Cyrus was about, they would not have suffered the Persians to enter the city, but would have utterly destroyed them: for, having shut all the little gates that lead down to

the river, and mounting the walls that extend along the banks of the river, they would have caught them as in a net—whereas the Persians came upon them by surprise. It is related by the people who inhabited this city that, by reason of its great extent, when they who were at the extremities were taken, those of the Babylonians who inhabited the center knew nothing of the capture (for it happened to be a festival); but they were dancing at the time, and enjoying themselves, till they received certain information of the truth.”

Xenophon: “The trenches were now dug; and Cyrus, when he heard that there was a festival in Babylon, in which all the Babylonians drank and reveled the whole night, took during the time of it a number of men with him, and as soon as it was dark opened the trenches on the side towards the river. When this was done the water ran off in the night into the trenches, and the bed of the river through the city allowed men to walk along it.”

I will quote a few passages from the prophecies which are thought to allude to the facts stated in these extracts. Babylon was taken

during a drunken revel, in which many passed from the stupor and sleep of drunkenness to the sleep of death. Jeremiah li, 39: "In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake." 57: "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts."

Entrance into the city was accomplished by diminishing the water in the channel of the river. Jeremiah li: "I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry." Isaiah xlv: "That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers."

News of the advantage gained by the Persians did not at once reach the center of the city; and from other portions of the history it appears that it did not reach the king till the Persians were at the gate of the palace. Jeremiah li, 31: "One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end."

Drunkenness doubtless led to both carelessness and indiscretion. The gates from the river to the streets were found open. As to those of the palace, Xenophon says: "Those who attended Gadatas and Gobryas found the doors of the palace shut; those who were appointed to attack the guards fell upon them as they were drinking at a large fire, and dealt with them as with enemies. As a great clamor and noise ensued, those who were within heard the tumult, and as the king ordered them to see what was the matter some of them threw open the gates and rushed out. Those who were with Gadatas, as soon as they saw the gates unclosed, burst in." Isaiah xlv: "And I will loose the loins of kings, to open the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut."

The entire proceeding was a surprise to Babylon and its rulers. Jeremiah l, 24: "I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught."

The prophecies describe the condition to which various cities and nations should at length come. If the prophecies are the fruits of fortune-telling, or dreaming, in its ordinary

sense, or if the appearance of fulfillment is due to some mistake or fraud in regard to the dates of the prophecies, then we shall find that as we proceed into the field of modern observation this appearance of fulfillment will vanish. But we do not so find. We have now too nearly reached the limit of the only chapter I have thought to devote to this part of the subject to do justice to this point: but it is a truth that as we pass from the facts of Bible history to those of profane history, and from the facts of profane history to those of modern observation, the striking character of the fulfillments does not in the least abate.

Of several prominent cities known to the prophets, they say that those cities shall be perpetual desolations; not using this word in the sense in which it is used in regard to the region whose inhabitants were carried to Babylon, in which perpetual is limited by the period of seventy years definitely specified, but accompanying it with the most emphatic statement that they shall never again be inhabited. The sites of those cities are now desolations, and it is highly probable that they will ever remain so; for, whatever course

commerce between the East Indies and the western world may take, there is no probability that it will again be a caravan trade across Western Asia; and without the return of that commerce to its ancient course those cities can not be rebuilt and sustained. The probability that those cities will ever remain desolations has more fully manifested itself within the last half-century, and since the making of the Suez Canal and the projecting of similar work on the American isthmus.\*

The desolate condition of that region of country, and of the specified cities, with the forsaken prospect before them, is not unimportant to our inquiry. It is a conspicuous reminder of the foreknowledge of the prophets. And yet for our present purpose, which is to determine whether what is called foreknowledge was or was not knowledge, the feature just mentioned is not the most important of the features of the prophecies. A distinguishing characteristic of knowledge, whether it be knowledge of things present or of things to come, is the ability to discriminate. The

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\* This feature of the fulfillment of prophecy is more fully shown in the writings of Rev. Albert Barnes.

suggestion may occur that prophecies of the class just mentioned are denunciations poured forth by men who felt commissioned to the performance of a great work, and irritated by the adverse influence of neighboring cities and nations—denunciations which the chances of war, and changes in the map of civilization and the course of commerce, might easily fulfill. Taking this possibility into the account, and considering that the probability of failure was but little greater than the probability that fulfillment would occur (which would scarcely have been the case if no discriminations had been made), it is still important that the prophecies were conspicuously right.

But is there an instance in which a prophet accurately hit his mark where there were a hundred chances that he would miss it? There are many such. One will be pointed out in this place.

The description given by Moses of the fate that would at length overtake the Jews, in case of their disobedience, fits the history of the modern Jews, and their present condition, with the accuracy of a garment made by a skillful



workman. It could not be applied at all to the history, and the present condition of any other nation or race of men.

We are just here more especially engaged with the fulfillments displayed to modern observation; but the place of Moses in Jewish history is so firmly fixed, and the circumstances in which these warnings were given, before the Jews were fully established in Palestine, determine the time of their utterance with so much certainty, that some allusion to later Bible history will be excused, in order that we may have a connected view of these prophecies.

In Deuteronomy iv, there is a prophecy, or a warning, of a captivity at a period then in the distant future of Jewish history, with a promise of restoration on the people's returning to obedience. It was uttered as the Jews were entering the promised land: "When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger, I call heaven

and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it." During this captivity they should be induced, or compelled, to "serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell." Then follows the prediction of restoration. This prophecy is repeated in the thirtieth chapter, with a more explicit statement of some of its features. It is also given in Leviticus xxvi.

Ten hundred years after this we find Nehemiah, at Shushan, far from the land of the Hebrews, praying: "Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. . . . O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants." It will not be claimed that

following the advice of Moses was fulfilling his prophecy. Attention is merely asked to the view Moses appears to have had of the events leading up to the situation in which the prayer of Nehemiah was appropriate.

The sin and weakness of the Jews mentioned in this prophecy, and from which their entire course of special training was designed to cure them, was idolatry. The prophecy as given in Deuteronomy xxx closes with these words: "And the Lord thy God, will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." The restoration was the entrance upon the state of things described in the passage quoted from Rénan, near the close of the third chapter, in which the Jews stand as martyrs to the ideas which their fathers were ready to betray at any moment.

The warnings of Moses dwell upon the distress that should be witnessed in the sieges of Jewish cities, on account of famine. The history of those sieges justifies the most horrid features of the outline sketched in the prophetic warnings. At Samaria "an ass's head

was sold for fourscore pieces of silver." When Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, "the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land;" and when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans this experience was repeated. Deuteronomy xxviii: "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons, and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: so that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter: . . . for she shall eat

them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates."

The shocking details of the siege of Samaria, of the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, accord accurately with this prediction, and display the feeling which gives its peculiar character to this prophecy. Deuteronomy xxviii, 36: "The Lord shall bring thee, and the king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone." When this was predicted, and for about four hundred years afterward, the Jews had no king. During the captivity at Babylon all the events here predicted became facts of history.

Deuteronomy xxviii, 49 and 68: "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." "And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." The

Romans made conquests with such rapidity as to suggest the flight of the eagle, their standard was the eagle, and neither their language, nor that of the soldiers gathered to some extent in Western Europe, was understood by the Jews. At the close of the siege captives were carried to Egypt and sold till the market was glutted.

“And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other.” Hadrian issued a proclamation forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines. The Jews have not gathered together and located themselves as a nation during the past eighteen hundred years, but continue scattered among all people from one end of the earth to the other. Yet they maintain a distinct existence. To borrow a figure from chemistry, they mix with other nations but do not combine; fulfilling the prophecy that they should not be “destroyed utterly.”

“And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot find rest,” “and thy life shall hang in doubt before

thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life." It was declared that "they should be oppressed and crushed alway." Compare this with a fragment taken from the discussion of the civil disabilities of the Jews in England. It had been said that the English Jews were not Englishmen; that they were a separate people, living locally in that island, but living morally and politically in communion with their brethren who are scattered all over the world. "The English Jews are, as far as we can see, precisely what our government has made them. They are precisely what any sect, what any class of men treated as they have been treated, would have been. If all the red-haired people in Europe had, during centuries, been outraged and oppressed, banished from this place, imprisoned in that, deprived of their money, deprived of their teeth, convicted of the most improbable crimes on the feeblest evidence, dragged at horses' tails, hanged, tortured, burned alive, if, when manners became milder, they had still been subject to debasing restrictions and exposed to vulgar insults, locked up in particular streets in some countries, pelted

and ducked by the rabble in others, excluded everywhere from magistracies and honors, what would be the patriotism of gentlemen with red hair?" (Macaulay's Essay on the Civil Disabilities of the Jews.)

Moses says: "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." Such they certainly have been, and are. It is also certain that the language of these several predictions can not be applied to any other nation or people. Here is a strange career—unique in the annals of men. If there was no knowledge of this state of things in the mind of the prophet, it is a strange coincidence that enables us to apply the language of the prophecy. It is wonderful that the founder of this nation should have been able, three thousand years ago, with a few bold strokes of the pen, to indicate the outlines of the winding path these people are still pursuing.

If this chapter had not extended beyond the average length, I should try to show that there is discrimination in the predictions concerning the condition to which various cities should at length arrive; that the description



of the ruins of Babylon, given in detail, and minutely applicable to the state of things there, is not applicable to the ruins of Tyre or Nineveh, but that each has its appropriate description. This, however, must be omitted.

Before leaving the class of prophecies under consideration, I will try to bring together into a group the prominent facts in regard to them which induce a belief in the existence of prophecy as a fact of history.

1. The great number of the prophecies, and the number of the fields in which the fulfillments may be traced, render it less probable that believers are in error in regard to the reality of prophecy.

2. The lives of the prophets, and of those who in Bible history have pointed out fulfillments, indicate an honest and earnest purpose to improve their nation in morals and religion. This diminishes the probability of fraud or error in regard to prophecy.

3. The Jews were explicitly warned to beware of false prophets, and in their history they had experience with such. They were taught to expect, from the prophet's predictions whose fulfillment should soon follow, to

investigate these, and from these to form their opinion of each prophet. With these predictions were associated those of another class, some of which were to be fulfilled in a year or two, and others at the end of a considerable, but specified, time. A notable specimen of this class was the prediction of the restoration to take place at the end of seventy years. Predictions of the restoration, with specific mention of seventy years as the period of captivity, are contained in the prophecies of both Isaiah and Jeremiah. This period was specially impressed upon the minds of the people by the fact that in the time of Jeremiah its length was controverted both at Jerusalem and at Babylon by prophets who were denounced as false. With these were associated prophecies, mostly delivered by the founder of the nation, which sketched the outline of the course of events which should make up Jewish history. With all these were associated prophecies of the Messiah, the fulfillment of which could not be seen at all during the period of Old Testament history. These people were familiar with the history of the utterance of the prophecies, and the mode of

their preservation. The result of this experience with prophecy was an implicit confidence in it; not the indifferent assent which men give to claims and assertions which but lightly touch their interests, but a belief which held strong passions and inclinations in check, and greatly modified the character of the nation.

I will recall in this connection two facts already mentioned, which show the character of this confidence in prophecy. To what was said in another chapter of the relation of prophecy to the overthrow of polytheism and idolatry, I will here add a passage from Isaiah xlviii: "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them: I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them; and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them."

Prophecy divides the honor of overthrowing idolatry with the other means used; but

I think it may be believed that prophecy, including the prophetic promises and warnings of Moses, was the most efficient of the means used. By the use of means among which prophecy holds so prominent a place, the people of this nation were borne upward, against a powerful current, to a position, religiously, quite above that of the surrounding nations. Prophecy can only have exerted an influence in this work through a deeply seated belief in its reality.

The prophecies concerning the Messiah could have no fulfillment during the Old Testament period, except as teachers and deliverers appeared who were looked upon as types of the Messiah. The careers of these, however, became parts of the prophecy rather than of the fulfillment. The expectation of the Messiah could only be built upon the fulfillment of other prophecies.

That was doubtless an intelligent appeal to a belief that really existed in which Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." So also was that of Paul, which could probably in his day have

been addressed to any Jew, in high or low position, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

4. Cyrus, who sustained a relation to prophecy so very peculiar, and whose opportunities for investigation were good, appears to have arrived at a conviction in regard to prophecy like that arrived at by the Jews.

5. The history of the utterance of the prophecies is so interwoven with the history of the nation as to leave on us the impression that the prophecies were delivered when they are claimed to have been; and the nature of the events mentioned in the Bible by which some of them were fulfilled is such that we can not doubt their occurrence.

6. The time of the utterance of the prophecies being determined as in the case just stated, we find that statements of later Greek historians, who knew nothing of the prophecies, show remarkable fulfillments.

7. The striking character of the fulfillments does not abate as we pass from the events of Bible history to those of profane history, and from the events of profane history to those of modern observation.

Before taking up the prophecies concerning the Messiah, a survey of these facts has produced in the minds of many a belief like that produced in the minds of the Jews before the birth of Jesus—a belief that the men who predicted the Messiah possessed an ability to foretell events.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES VIEWED FROM  
A MODERN STAND-POINT.

IT is thought by some that there are powers of the mind by which, if they were sufficiently developed, men could see future events; and they look on the prophecies as the work of men in whom these powers were by some chance unusually developed. There are Christians who hold a similar view, attributing prophecy to the unusual development of powers which remain dormant in other men; but these do not attribute this unusual development to chance. Without expressing an opinion as to whether prophecy is the result of an unusual development, or is not, we may spend a moment in considering whether this development, if it existed, should be attributed to chance, or to the design of a superior intelligence. In the course of the remarks heretofore made we have noted facts arranged as

we might expect them if the Gospels are true—arranged as we had no reason to expect them if the Gospels are false. Have we not here a fact to be added to this list? Why do we find the unusual development of these powers in this connection, and not to any remarkable extent anywhere else?

Things may be scattered promiscuously, or distributed with reference to the accomplishment of a desired end. The position of the native trees, the stones, and the various soils of a farm show no design on the part of the farmer; while the position of the fences, stables, planted trees, wells, house, and all other improvements shows a design on the part of the farmer which a visitor can not fail to recognize. These are the appliances by which certain desired ends are to be accomplished.

A part of the task undertaken in these chapters is to point out the arrangement of certain facts of history which appears to show design on the part of the Being claimed to be the author of Christianity. If the prophecies are admitted to be real, we can scarcely doubt that they were designed to accomplish certain ends. If so much is admitted, no philosophy



of the prophecies will help us to evade their force as supports to the evidences of Christianity.

The explanation that is probably made in the minds of the greatest number of unbelievers is, that the fulfillments noted by the New Testament writers are due to the expectation of a Messiah—a few facts happening to coincide with the prophecies, the imagination of the New Testament writers, excited by the descriptions given in the prophecies, supplied what was needed to give to Jesus the rounded character and the incidents of a complete fulfillment; while all other fulfillments, furnishing collateral support to these, are mere coincidences.

This explanation has two prominent ideas, previous expectation and accidental coincidence. It will be appropriate to devote a few words to each of these before proceeding to the prophecies themselves.

It is thought that the expectation accounts largely for the fulfillments. Will those who use this explanation go back with us one step farther, and tell us how the expectation came to be? In an earlier chapter a few words

were used to point out the steps by which confidence in the prophecies concerning a Messiah was gradually built up until a firm and wide-spread expectation was the result. The association of this with a still more elaborate scheme was mentioned, and some allusion was made to the good fortune of the lucky founder who fell heir to the fruits of both these schemes. Let us now think for a moment of the existence of the prophecies themselves.

It is a fact unique in the history of nations that, for a period of ten centuries and more, Hebrew poets chanted the praises of a person who had not yet appeared in their history, but who was expected in the future. The heroes of earlier periods were the great figures which stood out before the imaginations of other writers. To the Hebrews, though Moses was a great leader, and both he and the later prophets were great teachers, and though, as they thought, there had been great and glorious rulers, yet these were all but types and shadows of a greater to come.

If an early English writer had ventured to predict the coming of some very extraordinary

personage in the course of later English history, that prediction placed on record would be somewhat strange; but if English writers during the next one thousand years had taken up the refrain, making additional statements, and somewhat in detail, in regard to his characteristics and the peculiarities of his influence on the condition of mankind in the ages that should succeed his appearance, the very existence of this body of literature would be passing strange. A body of literature analogous to this, however, exists in the Old Testament, and did exist before the coming of Christ. Nothing analogous to it has ever existed anywhere else.

With the exception of Strauss, Rénan has made more use of this expectation theory, in accounting for the career of Jesus, than any other writer; and yet the singularity of the condition of the society in which Jesus appeared seems to have impressed him. He says: "An immense expectation fills every soul. All Indo-European antiquity had placed Paradise at the beginning; all its poets had wept a golden age departed. Israel placed the golden age in the future." Why was this? As we

proceed it may appear that Rénan has done more and better for us than this, but this is quite good. Certainly the facts of history, so far as we have facts of history in the time and place of the writing of the prophecies, are arranged as we might expect to find them if the Gospels are true, and the entire religious development of the Bible progressed under the superintendence of one great mind, as we should have no reason to expect to find them if the Gospels are false or unreliable.

The other prominent idea contained in the explanation just referred to, accidental coincidence, should be considered a little more at length; for, if it is available at all, it, or chance in some form, is needed not only to explain the fulfillments, but also the time and place of the writing of the prophecies; and not only for these purposes, but to explain the existence and arrangement of the various facts of nature and of history which seem to support the claims of Christianity.

Dice are commonly used to illustrate the "theory of chance," or, "doctrine of probabilities," and they will serve our present purpose; though the most elementary facts of the sub-

ject are all we shall need in our illustration. A single die is a cube having six sides. If this is thrown at random there are equal probabilities that either of the six sides will be presented upward. If I predict which side will be presented upward, there are five chances that I shall be wrong, and one chance that I shall be right. If I place my finger on this die and hold it still, I may at the same time change the position of another die till it has, in succession, presented each one of its six sides upward. If I now change the position of the die under my finger, and again hold it still, while it is so held the second die can be placed in any or all of six possible positions. This can be done six times, for the first die has six sides. And so there are six times six, or thirty-six possible positions for these two dice. If these two dice are thrown at random there are equal probabilities that either of the thirty-six possible positions will be taken. If I predict which of these thirty-six positions will be taken, there are thirty-five chances that I shall be wrong and one chance that I shall be right. If I again place my finger on the first die, and introduce two other dice, these

two can be placed in each of thirty-six possible positions, and this can be done six times, for the first die has six sides. And so for three dice there are six times thirty-six, or two hundred and sixteen possible positions. If I predict as before, there are two hundred and fifteen chances that I shall be wrong, and one chance that I shall be right. At each addition of a die the number of the positions that are possible is multiplied by six. When four dice are used the number of the possible positions is twelve hundred and ninety-six. If a gambler should state his willingness to bet on his ability to predict the exact one of the twelve hundred and ninety-six positions that would be taken, the group about him would see little danger in betting. But if the predicted one of the twelve hundred and ninety-six positions should be taken, few would fail to reach the conclusion that the dice were loaded—in other words, that his means of knowing the result was something different from a calculation of chances. In the case of the prophets the handling of the dice-cup was usually left to later centuries; but they predicted with all the assurance of the gambler. Was their

means of knowing the result something different from a calculation of chances? Were the coincidences something different from accidental ones? The result should tell us.

Think a moment of the hazard there is in predicting the events of future centuries. A storm at sea could destroy the Spanish Armada, built for the conquest of England, but could not be foreseen even at the distance of a few months. A fragment of rock falling into some channel on the Rocky Mountains may obstruct the course of a stream which through all previous time had flowed toward the Atlantic, and set it flowing through all later time toward the Pacific. So some event apparently small in itself, as the discovery of a new route, or the discovery of a new gold mine, may change the course of commerce, or the distribution of population.

In modern times no career has modified the course of events more than the career of Napoleon. And yet Napoleon, in his younger days, was moody, melancholy, doubtful of the value of life. In one of these moods a small cord, of good material, fastened to a rafter above and well adjusted at its lower end, might have

cut short the career of Napoleon; or, a ball from the pistol of some rival might have done it. Events like these may cut the thread of a prophecy right in two. A man with only natural sagacity may say that in the future, as in the past, there will be Alexanders, Cæsars, and Napoleons, with overreaching ambition and military skill; but where shall he place his Alexander, his Cæsar, and his Napoleon?

There are also social and religious changes which amount to the most radical of revolutions. If a prophet undertakes to indicate one of these revolutions on his map of the future, at what point on the earth's surface shall he indicate that this revolution will first set in? What date shall he give its beginning? Shall he indicate that at this point the stream of events will turn to the right or to the left? Natural sagacity will not help him to do this work even one hundred or two hundred years in advance.

In the course of this chapter there will be occasion to refer to a revolution—not a small revolution in some corner of the world where it might be overlooked—not a revolution so like other revolutions that a general and am-



biguous description would answer for either this or the others—the only revolution of its kind—the most radical change in the customs of men that has ever taken place—the greatest revolution in the history of the world. A prophet in the stream of his predictions made this turn without the slightest show of hesitation—turned at the right time—turned in the right place—turned in the right direction; and mentioned prominent events in the history of that period with which the modern student of history finds that revolution associated.

From these illustrations it is doubtless understood that an effort will be made to show that the fulfillments of the prophecies concerning the Messiah are so numerous and of such kinds that they could not have resulted from chance; or, without foreknowledge on the part of the prophets.

In attempting to show this, dependence will be placed on those fulfillments which can be seen and studied to best advantage from a modern stand-point. Many fulfillments were noted by the New Testament writers. Their statements in regard to fulfillments have just the credibility that their statements have in

regard to miracles, and no more.\* But a prophecy having been so written that a part only of its fulfillment could be seen in the period covered by the New Testament writings, while the fulfillment of the greater part is left to the observation as well as the criticism of later ages, if the fulfillment of that part whose fulfillment can be seen to best advantage from a modern stand-point is complete and impressive, our respect for the statements made by the New Testament writers will be increased.

That we may keep in view fulfillments of both these classes, I will recite briefly some

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\* Colonel Ingersoll says, "Their reputation for truth and veracity in the neighborhood where they resided is wholly unknown to us." This statement, which is a repetition of what had been said in substance by others, is not correct. The writings bespeak the character of the writers. It is also evident that they had, by some means, sufficient standing to carry forward that revolution which Rénan pronounces the capital event in the history of the world. Besides, the voluntary exposure of the early disciples to privation, suffering, and death is ample evidence that they believed what they preached to others. Still, in the presence of this sentiment, it will be proper to place greater stress upon the fulfillment of the prophecies as seen from a modern stand-point.

of the fulfillments claimed to have been known to the New Testament writers.

Each of the four evangelists places at or near the beginning of his Gospel an account of John the Baptist, as the forerunner of Christ which according to the prophecies should prepare the way before him. He is mentioned in the same way by Jesus himself, and by Paul. It is evident that the enemies of Jesus demanded that he should show the fulfillment of prophecy in this respect before claiming himself to be the Messiah. "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him what they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

The prophecies had said that Elijah should first come. In Luke's Gospel it is said of John, "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." It is throughout

claimed that John was the Elijah of that day, as we say of one who has the characteristics of Webster that he is the Webster of the present day. Isaiah had spoken of a voice in the wilderness crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

In Malachi it is said: "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." In the next chapter: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."

The special work of John the Baptist, as represented in the Gospels, was calling the people to repentance and reformation of life, in preparation for the immediate coming of the Messiah. The order of Christ's coming to the world is the order in which the consolations of the Christian religion come to the mind of the believer—following repentance, and "fruits meet for repentance." The Gospels give to John the habits of Elijah, as well

as the more important characteristics—the coarse dress, the simple food, the life in the wilderness, as well as the stern rebukes of sin.

All this is of no force to one who knows nothing of the facts; but those to whom the writings and the discourses of the New Testament were at first addressed must have been able either to verify or to refute most of what is said of John. His career is represented as a very conspicuous as well as peculiar one. Jewish readers, at least, must have known whether such a person, generally believed by the people to have been a prophet, did preach the necessity of repentance and reformation, in the desert region near Jerusalem; did baptize in the Jordan, and proclaim the immediate coming of the long-expected Messiah; whether multitudes from Jerusalem flocked to hear him, or whether these things did not happen. The career of John, taken in connection with the notes of the time and place at which the Messiah should appear, was a conspicuous mark to those who had opportunity to know the facts.

Fulfillments to be seen from a modern stand-point will be left for the most part to

later chapters; but I will ask in this connection whether the prophecies do not give to the modern student a much more conspicuous fact with which, in following up the long line of events in the world's history, he will find the career of the Messiah associated?

In the earliest dawn of history the practice of offering animals in sacrifice to gods was in progress, and had doubtless existed from the time when man first recognized his sinfulness and perceived his religious wants. Whatever chronology we adopt, man, during much more than half of the existence of the race to the present time, was given to this practice. The law of Moses made special provisions for separating this practice from idolatry, and permitting its continuance in that way. Under these provisions the offering of sacrifices continued through nearly one-half of the period that has now elapsed since the time of Moses.

If any prophet had the sagacity to see that in later centuries men would drop this practice and never return to it, it must have been the very height of presumption on his part if he undertook to mark the very time and place at which this greatest of revolutions would set

in, and mention events with which it would be associated. Daniel predicts that the Messiah shall cause the oblation—that is, the offering of sacrifices—to cease, and associates this event with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and of the temple. So much would appear to apply to Jewish sacrifices; and so limited, the event is an important fulfillment in itself, as well as indication of the place of the expected Messiah in history; but Daniel predicts that the kingdom which the God of heaven should set up, though small in its beginnings, and extending gradually, would at length fill the whole earth. The supposition that Messiah's kingdom would maintain the same customs and exert the same influence wherever it should extend is not extravagant.

As an inquirer after the truth of the claim put forth by Jesus living in his day, would, besides applying other tests and estimating other indications, trace the succession of events which should precede the coming of the Messiah, and carefully examine the career of John, so a modern inquirer, as much interested as the older one, noticing Daniel's statement that the Messiah shall cause the sacrifice and the

oblation to cease, and that this event is associated with the Messiah's death, who "shall be cut off, but not for himself," he places a finger of one hand on these statements, and with a finger of the other, beginning with the present state of things, he traces up the line of history to the time and place at which this great change in the customs of men set in. Whatever additional light this inquirer may desire he will no longer doubt that the career of Jesus occupied about the place in history assigned by the prophet to the Messiah.

There are many points of interest in Daniel's prophecies concerning the Messiah, as: the improbability that a Jew, during the period when a strict conformity to the law of Moses was thought by the faithful to be all important, should predict the cessation of sacrifices, the prediction of the succession of kingdoms that should precede the Messiah's coming, the prediction of the time that should elapse from the issuing of a certain proclamation, and the manner in which the heavenly kingdom should spread. Comment on these would make this episode too long, and would be somewhat foreign to its purpose, which was merely to point



out this radical change in the customs of men, which should follow the career of the Messiah, as we now see that it follows the career of Jesus.

The period of the Messiah was also placed between certain limits by Haggai, who prophesied to the effect that the Messiah should appear during the existence of the second temple.

The place at which the Messiah should appear was definitely fixed by the prophet Micah, at Bethlehem, a small town about six miles from Jerusalem; and lest another town bearing the same name should cause some mistake, or doubt, the name Ephratah, by which Bethlehem in Judah had been known at an earlier day, is added.

The evangelists state that this prophecy was fulfilled, giving the circumstances which led to the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem instead of Nazareth, the home of Joseph and Mary. Not only has it appeared to Strauss, Rénan, and other modern critics that this fulfillment is improbable, but the contempt for the Nazarene shown during his life may have been in part due to the fact that prophecy had fixed

the birthplace of the Messiah at Bethlehem, which would seem to cut off the claims of a Nazarene. I am, however, merely reciting fulfillments of which the New Testament writers claim to have known.

The lineage of the Messiah according to the prophecies should be, when traced upward: The family of David, of the tribe of Judah, of the descendants of Abraham, of the race of Shem. All this is claimed to have been fulfilled. Only that part which specifies the family of David is questioned by modern critics.

When other aspects of the prophecies are taken into the account, what stands unquestioned in regard to the lineage of Jesus, and the region in which he was unquestionably born, are of great importance to the modern inquirer after the validity of the claim of Jesus to the Messiahship.

The return of the Jews from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, are among the most memorable events in Jewish history. The length of time that should elapse from the issuing of the proclamation to rebuild Jerusalem to the Mes-

siah, is definitely stated, but not in terms with which we are familiar. At the time of Jesus the Hebrew language, though not exclusively used, was still in use; and its idioms must have been familiar to the people, especially to the more scholarly among them. We gather, with feelings of interest, such indications as we can of the view taken by those people of the fitness of the claim of Jesus as to time.

The expectation on which Strauss and Rénan have built, and which unquestionably existed, was an expectation that the Messiah would appear at that time. If it had been an expectation that at a later period the Messiah would appear, such expectation would have embarrassed, instead of encouraging, the aspirations of a claimant.

The fact that no discussion of this point appears in the New Testament would furnish us little light, if no other discussions appeared there; but the discussions of disputed points appear to be given freely. The discussion in regard to the forerunner of the Messiah has already been mentioned. In the seventh chapter of John we read: "Others said, this is the Christ. But some said, shall Christ come out

of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was?" After further sharp discussion, Nicodemus remarked, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." If there had been discussions in regard to the time it does not appear that writings of this character would have omitted them. There would appear to have been occasions when the discussion of this point would have been made prominent. When Herod demanded of the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born, and was referred to the prophecy of Micah, there would have been no occasion for anxiety in regard to the place, if the time had not been understood to accord with prophecy. It is so generally agreed that the Jews, and in fact people of neighboring nations also, were expecting the Messiah at that time, that no lengthy discussion of the point is necessary. The existence of this expectation gives us the understanding of prophecy on this point held by the Jews of that day.

We shall have a statement of several of the prophecies of the fulfillment of which the New Testament writers claim to have known, if we introduce a passage from Strauss, and one from Rénan, in which those writers present the prophecies which they believe assisted in the construction of the New Testament story. These passages are written with the incredulous air of men who suppose they are accounting for the statements in the New Testament; but the New Testament is written with the air of men who know whereof they affirm.

“The hope of the Messiah had existed long before the time of Jesus in the minds of the people of Israel; and, at that epoch, it had attained the highest degree of maturity and development. Far from being a hope ill determined, it had been from the commencement definite, and invested with many characters. Moses is said to have presaged to his people a prophet like to himself—‘The Lord thy God will raise up to thy nation, and to thy brothers, a prophet like unto me;’ and that passage was, at the time of Jesus, understood as relating to the Messiah. Hence the rabbinical principle: such as the first redeemer has been,

the same will be the second redeemer; the character of which redeemer has been developed according to certain peculiar characteristics expected in the Messiah, according to the type of Moses. Further, the Messiah was to come from the race of David, and occupy the throne as a second David; it is therefore that the Jews expected, at the time of Jesus, that the Messiah would be born, as David, in the little town of Bethlehem. In the Mosaic passage cited above the supposed Messiah was designated as a prophet, and in that quality he was as the last and crowning work of the prophetic series. Now, the prophets in the ancient national legend had been glorified by actions and destinies the most extraordinary. How should we expect less of the Messiah? His life, ought it not to be ornamented by anticipations of all that there is of most brilliant and characteristic in the lives of the prophets? The popular expectation, would it not attribute to him the noblest portion of the prophetic character? and like Jesus, the manifested Messiah would consider his own sufferings and those of his disciples as a participation of the dark side of the lives of these

men of God. If Moses and all the prophets had prophesied of the Messiah, it was easy for the Jews, with their typologic tendency, to consider their actions and their doctrines, not less than their sentiments and their predictions, as types of the Messiah. Finally, the time of the Messiah was, above all, looked forward to as a time of signs and miracles. The eyes of the blind were opened, the deaf were made to hear, the lame to skip nimbly, the tongue of the dumb to praise God. These expressions, purely metaphoric, were taken literally; and in that fashion the image of the Messiah, before the appearance of Jesus, was sketched with more and more of exactness. Thus, in many legends respecting Jesus, there was no necessity to invent ideas—they were already furnished by the image of the Messiah living in the hopes of the people—so that they were for the most part, after being re-handled, transported from the Old Testament, when it was only necessary to apply them to Jesus, and remodify them to accord completely with his personality, character, and doctrine; and never, perhaps, was the application more easy, since he who the first carried some char-

acteristics to the Old Testament in the annunciation of Jesus, without doubt, himself believed in the reality of his recital; and he believed from the following argument: such and such a thing belongs to the Messiah; now Jesus was the Messiah; then such things happened to Jesus." (Strauss.)

Speaking of the prophets, Rénan says: "They early announced unbounded hopes, and when the nation, the victim in part of their impolitic counsels, had been crushed by the Assyrian power, they proclaimed that an unlimited kingdom was in reserve for them, that one day Jerusalem would be the capital of the whole world, and that the human race would become Jewish. Jerusalem appeared to them like a city placed upon the summit of a mountain towards which all nations must flow, like an oracle whence the law of the universe must emanate, like the center of an ideal realm in which the human race, made peaceful by Israel, should taste again the joys of Eden.

"Unknown accents already made themselves heard in exaltation of the martyr, and in celebration of the power of the 'man of sorrows.' Concerning one of those sublime



sufferers, who, like Jeremiah, reddened with their blood the streets of Jerusalem, an inspired one wrote a canticle on the sufferings and the triumph of the 'Servant of the Most High,' in which all the prophetic power of the genius of Israel seems concentrated. 'He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before

her shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.'"

The New Testament writers claimed to know that these predictions were fulfilled, so far as they were to be fulfilled in their day. There is special interest in their statements in regard to fulfillments which they witnessed in the trial, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The events are stated to have taken place when Jesus was in the hands of his enemies. The mock trial, the crucifixion between two thieves, the casting of lots for his garment, the burial in a rich man's tomb, are fulfillments too numerous, and fol-

lowing each other in too rapid succession, to be the result of chance.

According to the New Testament statements, the fact that the humiliation, suffering, and death of the Messiah had been foretold in minute detail, together with the resurrection of Jesus considered both as a miracle and as a fulfillment of prophecy, took a prominent place in the argument used immediately after the death of Jesus, and many thousands of Jews, familiar with both the prophecies and the events by which they were fulfilled, believed.

A few days after the disappearance of Jesus from the earth, the number of disciples associated and known as such was one hundred and twenty. A few days later three thousand were added; and but little later there is mention of five thousand men who believed. Multitudes both of men and women continued to be added. Additions were made daily. Many of the priests also were obedient to the faith. During the first year after the ascension, the preaching of the Gospel appears to have been confined to Jerusalem; and this is the New Testament statement in regard to its success. A few years later on Paul's return to Jerusa-

lem, he is informed that many thousands of Jews believe. The great number of Christians which appear a little later, as the stream of Christian events is seen in the general current of history, tends to sustain the New Testament statements in regard to the rapidity with which believers multiplied at Jerusalem.

The writer of these statements represents himself as a companion of Paul in his travels, and it appears probable that he had a part in many of the scenes described in the book of Acts. He claims, in the Gospel written by him, to have "had perfect understanding of all things" pertaining to the Christian movement "from the very first."

These statements give us the triumphs, as the statements at the close of the Gospels give us the sufferings, of the "man of sorrows." The writer of the book of Acts having in his "former treatise" made his statement "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach," here proceeds to state what he continued to do through the supernatural assistance given to the disciples. His soul having been made an offering for sin, the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hand.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES VIEWED FROM  
A MODERN STAND-POINT—CONTINUED.

A BUILDING of note and of general interest may be viewed from various stand-points. One standing quite near it is able to remark upon the manner in which the work was executed, and may read an inscription in small characters on its wall, though he gains only an imperfect idea of its outlines. Another standing at a greater distance can not decide upon the execution of the work, and is unable to read the inscription; but he gains a better view of the building's dimensions, and from what he sees of its outlines gathers more of the design of its architect. If we do not carry the analogy too far we may say that the early disciples were in the position of the first of these observers, and that we are in the position of the second.

There was no ground on which the Phari-

sees contested the claim of Jesus more strenuously than his manner of observing the Sabbath; several of his miracles being performed on that day. "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." . . . "Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." The man, grateful for his sight, and able to hurl back more solid argument than the Pharisees could give, proceeded to do so. "They reviled him and said," "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow we know not from whence he is." He persisted: "If this man were not of God he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out."

At another time when Jesus was in the synagogue he met there a man with a withered hand and "they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him." After the healing, he quietly withdrew, while those who followed him and were healed were charged that they should not make him known.

Matthew, on recording this incident, is reminded of a passage in Isaiah in which this trait of character in the expected Messiah is pointed out: "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench till he send forth judgment unto victory." The meek and gentle spirit which should characterize the Messiah he recognizes in Jesus. He notes this fact. It was all of the fulfillment of this prophecy that could be seen from his standpoint. In transcribing the passage, however, he copies a few of the preceding and a few of the following words. From these, if we had no copy of the prophecy itself, we should be sure that it contained predictions of whose fulfillment Matthew had no knowledge, for those fulfillments had not then taken place. Turning to the forty-second chapter of Isaiah, we find that the words whose fulfillment Matthew points out are quite a subordinate feature of the prophecy. The sense appears to be as if the prophet had said, Though he is so meek and gentle that He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street,

yet he shall not fail, nor be discouraged till he shall have accomplished certain great ends, which are stated in the prophecy.

I will quote a few verses giving the connection in which Matthew's quotation stands in Isaiah. "Behold my servant whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out: he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will



I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands."

In the poetic writings of the Old Testament, the isles and the islands are distant, unknown, and unnamed, but habitable portions of the earth. The German followers of Strauss, the French followers of Rénan, and the New England radicals—inhabitants of the isles, in the sense of this passage—wait for the law of our moral and religious duty as expounded by Jesus, looking upon him as the world's great religious teacher. These add their numbers to those of the unreserved believers in fulfilling this prophecy.

The expression, "Ye that go down to the sea, . . . the isles, and the inhabitants thereof," is doubtless an expression suggested by the exploits of the neighboring Phœnicians, who in the time of Isaiah were traversing the Mediterranean, and probably passing out into the Atlantic, visiting the countries of Western Europe. The sense of this passage is not different from that of many of the predictions concerning the Messiah; but it has been introduced because so little of its fulfillment could be seen by the evangelist who quoted from it, and so much by us. It may on that account be taken as a representative of those prophecies which pertain to the kingdom to be established by the Messiah; for the growth of that kingdom was to be gradual—later generations must witness the germination and growth of seed planted by the Messiah.

The same thought as to the extent of the Messiah's kingdom is expressed in the second Psalm, where God is represented as addressing his Son: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

It is well to notice the relation of these

and similar expressions to the religion enjoined upon the Old Testament Jews, and largely sustained by the labors of the prophets themselves. That was a national and, necessarily, a local religion. Many of its rites could be observed only at the temple in Jerusalem. This fact gives its peculiar character to the assembly on the day of Pentecost, after the death of Jesus, Jews and Jewish proselytes being assembled at Jerusalem: "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians."

It is not to be supposed that the prophets clearly saw the adaptation of the teachings of the Messiah, and the customs of his religion, to the wants of all mankind; yet it is clear that the predictions are not predictions of a gradual expansion of Judaism. They clearly point to the coming of a person whose influence should extend to all the world.

A greater embarrassment to any other than the true Messiah can scarcely be conceived

than that which was presented by the time and manner of the fulfillment required by the prophecies. Among them are prophecies of whose fulfillment no sound should be heard till it could be heard in the march of centuries that should pass after a false Messiah would have moldered in his grave, or the true would have passed from his earthly mission. But we may speak of a fulfillment of which the early disciples could not speak. In a land four thousand miles from the little kingdom in which the prophecies were uttered, and unknown to the prophets; in a land in which material prosperity reaches every class; a land in which freedom is universal to an extent that was not approached in the civilizations of Greece and Rome, in which fetters are riven from both sexes and every race; in a land basking in the sunlight of a Christian civilization,—we proclaim the fulfillment of these prophecies.

In the prophecy of Daniel the kingdom of heaven is likened to a stone cut without hands from the mountain. The figure is so used as to teach that the kingdom would be small in its beginning, gradual in its growth, unending

in its duration, and universal in its final dominion. Connect with this the fact that only peaceful means were to be used in the advancement of this kindom, that its founder should be the "Prince of Peace," that swords should be beaten into plowshares, and you have a combination of embarrassments at which an impostor would "stand in pause where he should first begin."

But Jesus does not hesitate. By prophetic parables he gives assurance that these prophecies shall be fulfilled in their minutest details. The kingdom of heaven shall advance from its small beginning as the greatest of herbs grows from the smallest of seeds; silently the crude material is drawn from earth and air, silently it is assimilated, and gradually deposited. "Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

The stone that was cut from the mountain has rolled part way down the mountain side; the plant which sprang from the mustard-seed is partly grown; the meal is leavened only in part,—but the advance of Christianity has so

accorded with the prophecies as to give us confidence of complete fulfillment.

“All the world’s a stage.” Seated in our respective boxes, we take into our hands the programme which the prophets have given us. Through many acts the curtain has risen on the scenes in their order as here given. The Messiah has come, his kingdom is spreading in accurate accordance with the predictions concerning it; and now, as a Christian drops a dollar into a missionary collection, he does so with confidence, believing that the kingdom of Christ will ultimately fill the whole earth. And why should he not? “Behold, the former things are come to pass.”

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a different phase of prophecy, a mingling of prophecy and history brought into view by the trial of Stephen. This will bring us again into contemplation of the great change in the religious customs of men which followed the epoch of Jesus.

The means used to save men from idolatry have been dwelt upon at some length. Among them was a system of worship adapted to the people in the condition they were then in,

resembling the worship of the heathen in its ceremonious character, but differing from it in being free from idolatry. In having its sacred place, its costly temple, the Jewish nation was not unlike other nations of antiquity. At Thebes, in Upper Egypt, stood great Karnak, the most stupendous, though not the most beautiful, of ancient temples. The temple of Diana, at Ephesus, was accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. The majestic columns and fine proportions of Grecian temples were the pride of Grecian architects, as the sculptured gods which adorned them were the pride of Grecian artists. The finest and most enduring specimen of Roman architecture was the Pantheon, devoted to the worship of many gods. The Samaritan neighbors of the Jews, through reverence inspired by certain events recorded in the Old Testament patriarchal history, as well as through rivalry, erected a temple on Mt. Gerizim, and taught that there was where men ought to worship.

But at the epoch of Jesus a great change in the religious customs of men sets in. "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner

of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

During the conversation with the woman of Samaria at the well, she, led by the insight of Jesus into her character and conduct to believe him a prophet, proceeded to ask religious instruction. "Our fathers," said she, "worshiped in this mountain, and ye [that is, the Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."

It is thought that in Greek philosophy steps had been taken which facilitated the introduction of a pure and high spiritual religion; but in the Bible our attention is chiefly fixed on the steps in patriarchal and Jewish history which lead to Christ, and the influence which Jewish teachings had among their neighbors. Jesus alludes to these preparatory steps during this same pause at the well of Sychar, on finding a lively expectation of the Messiah,



and a readiness to believe. "Lift up your eyes," he said to his disciples, "and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors."

Whatever line of progress was referred to in the expression, "The hour cometh," the purport of the language is that by various steps, or by gradual growth, men were approaching the hour when they would drop the ceremonial worship at sacred places, and the sacred place would be found in a sincere and earnest heart.

But in the second verse from the one we have been considering the expression changes, and we read, "The hour cometh, *and now is*." They were standing at the very threshold of that change. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

The witnesses who testified against Stephen said: "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."

It would have been vain, before that council, to repeat the declaration of Jesus that the temple should be destroyed; but Stephen could have appealed to the prophecy of Daniel that the Messiah should cause the offering of sacrifices to cease. Whatever Stephen had said on the occasions referred to by these witnesses, his aim in his defense does not appear to be so much to show that these things will happen as to show that in case they should happen the same God might be worshiped in connection with other customs. In replying to the high-priest's question, "Are these things so?" he proceeded by a rehearsal of patriarchal and Jewish history to show, besides other points, that in other lands, and before the establishment of the Mosaic law, the same God had been worshiped; that during the history of their people at least one

great departure from previous modes of worship had been made—that made by Moses.

Moses had been refused and rejected, as Jesus then was. “This,” continued Stephen, “is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.” The likeness to Moses is not probably a resemblance in personal appearance, but likeness in office, in the relation sustained to God’s people, in intimate communion with God, and in the work to be performed. Whether Stephen correctly interpreted this prophecy or not, it is evident that in his view of it the prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, whose career would stand at the close of the ceremonial worship of the tabernacle and temple as that of Moses had stood at its beginning; that Jesus should lead in this later departure from previous customs as Moses had led in the earlier.

Both on account of the manner in which Stephen quotes this passage, and because it was apparently a standard quotation with the early disciples, it will be worth our while to turn back and study the connection in which

this prediction stands in the Old Testament. Stephen introduces this quotation in a discourse which gathers the lessons of long periods of history, and of revolutions separated by great lapses of time. There is something analogous to this in the manner in which the prediction at first appeared. Moses, when about to die, recounts before the children of Israel his experience with them during the forty years just closing, restates the law which is to be their guide through their existence as a nation, warns them of the danger of even inquiring how the nations before them had served their gods, advises them in regard to events which in certain contingencies might happen to them when they had been long in the land; and, while taking these extended views into the past and into the future, he apparently looks forward to the close of the period during which his own special instructions should be the guide of the people, to the coming of One who should occupy a position analogous to the position he himself had occupied during the transition, the events of which he had just recited. At least the connection in which we find the prediction in Deuteronomy lends force to

the view taken by Stephen, and furnishes collateral support to any other reasons he may have had for that view.

To dwell long upon the Messianic character of this passage would divert us from our theme—the change in religious customs which followed the period of Jesus—but a few words may be admitted. Joshua, the leader who immediately followed Moses, was not a prophet. The passage found no fulfillment in him. The note appended to the writings of Moses, and now constituting the close of the book of Deuteronomy, is by the hand of some later writer, and is attributed to Ezra, who revised the books of the law for the use of the people. The period of his writing is later than that of all the greater prophets. The note says, “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.” In the view of this writer the passage afterward quoted by Stephen could not be applied to any prophet previous to his day.

The prediction first given in the fifteenth verse of the eighteenth chapter is repeated in the eighteenth verse; and the intervening words lead us to apply the prediction to God’s

greatest representative on earth—the long-expected and often foretold Messiah. “No man hath seen God at any time.” The mode of his existence is incomprehensible to us, and our present organization would not probably bear a full manifestation of his power and glory. I will quote the prediction, with the intervening words :

“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”

The prophet so announced by Moses would have authority to introduce the great change, at the threshold of which, in the view of Stephen, they were then standing. It was, how-

ever, only the threshold at which they were standing; and, to merely human sagacity, how great the improbability that that threshold would ever be past! The glittering dome, at sight of which the eye of every Jew returning to the appointed feasts brightened with gladness, was nearly above the head of Stephen as he made his defense. The stones and buildings to which the disciples had pointed with wondering pride were still there, and the customs, now covered with the moss of fifteen centuries, seemed no less permanent than they; while the spirit manifested by the council before which Stephen was arraigned, and by the people who surrounded him, showed them ready to keep those buildings in their places, or to replace them if they should be thrown down.

Notice a later manifestation of Jewish feeling on this point. About twenty-seven years after the death of Stephen, Paul, who says of that earlier scene, "I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him," was himself in the temple. "The Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up

all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar: who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains: and demanded who he was, and what he had done. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude; and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was,



that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him."

He was permitted to speak from the stairway; and as he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, and in terms to appease their wrath, they listened till he mentioned his commission to preach to the Gentiles, and "then lifted up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air." One is reminded of the dust that is pawed and tossed by a herd of raging cattle.

It was about two years earlier than this, or, about twenty-five years after the death of Stephen that the uproar was raised in Ephesus by the thought that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised. It appears to me quite appropriate that this tumult about a heathen temple should be called to mind because the reverence and enthusiasm of neighboring nations for their sacred places would inspire the Jews to perpetuate the temple and its customs at Jerusalem, or to re-establish them if overthrown.

To the disciples of Strauss and Rénan it will be suggested that the New Testament writers who placed the words which have been quoted in the mouths of Jesus and of Stephen, and who supplied the accompanying scenery, wrote after the destruction of the temple, and when there was some more visible ground for anticipating the permanent cessation of the ancient customs. When this view is given its greatest possible scope, which is not very great, we shall still believe the various writings of the New Testament to have been made when the new order of things was in the incipient stage of its establishment, with the determined opposition of both Jew and pagan before it.

If the temple is supposed to have been in ruins when the New Testament was given its tone of strong assurance that the ancient customs were permanently passing away, it certainly was not in ruins for the first time. For a period of seventy years the temple had once been in ruins and the people in captivity. A writer even after the destruction of the temple, before presuming largely on that state of things, would turn to the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, and read: "By the rivers of

Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof: for they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

A New Testament writer depending merely on human sagacity might have expected that at some day a feeling like this would re-establish the ancient customs. During much of the time since the destruction of the temple the scattered Jews have had money enough to buy the privilege of re-establishing those customs, as they have at present. It is also a fact of history, that a Roman emperor having the means and the political power to rebuild the temple, and wishing to defeat the prophecies by taking that step, purposed to rebuild it; but it was not rebuilt.

Whatever may have been the intervening

causes which prevented the continuance, or the re-establishment of the customs which "Moses delivered," after the time of Christ, the Christian is accustomed to look directly at what appears to him the final cause. The Being who established the law of sacrifices and ceremonies, for certain temporary purposes, had no farther use for it. The scaffolding which had been used in construction was falling away, leaving exposed to view the beautiful structure known as the Christian religion.

The modern inquirer into the truth of Christianity should see in this great change in the customs of men something more than a great achievement accomplished by Jesus and his followers. It is an achievement which completes a scheme that was in existence when the Jewish nation was established; an achievement which fulfills prophecies of the Old Testament, whose fulfillment Jesus and his disciples anticipated when, to human sagacity, there was little probability that this revolution would be accomplished. The lapse of eighteen centuries has made the accomplishment of the revolution and the fulfillment of the prophecies quite evident to us.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES VIEWED FROM  
A MODERN STAND-POINT—CONTINUED.

IN the thirteenth century Marco Polo, a Venetian nobleman, traveled into Asia, spending many years there, and visiting the leading countries of that continent, making a considerable stop in Cathay, or China. On his return he published a book of wonders, containing marvelous accounts of what he had seen. He was esteemed a great liar. He was urged on his death-bed to retract his falsehoods; but he solemnly reaffirmed all his statements. As modern Europeans have become acquainted with those countries, the writings of Polo display more and more their veracity. If there is any thing still unverified by modern observation, it is received on account of the veracity which is found to be a general characteristic of the book. The sketch of Marco Polo in the American Cyclo-

pædia says, "There is now no doubt that he spoke the truth."

There are in the prophecies so many predictions concerning the expected Messiah and the result of his advent, which can be verified by one who studies the subject from a modern stand-point, as to do much towards establishing the claim of the prophetic writings to the character of true prophecy. I do not deem it important to dwell upon the fact that during the last century there has been a growth of respect for the writers of the New Testament similar to the growth of respect for the Venetian traveler, so that the style of most late writers is quite different from that of Paine and others of his day who denounced those writers as liars; but it will be appropriate to show that facts which have been made conspicuous by modern writers, and facts which are apparent to those who look upon the present situation, are such as to increase our respect for the New Testament writers, and especially for what they say in regard to the fulfillment of prophecy in the facts of the life of Jesus.

In the Gospels we have the biographical

sketches of surviving friends, but the career of Jesus has passed into history. Those great features of the Messiah's character and of the advance of his kingdom which lie in the province of the historian are no less worthy of study than the finer lines which are sketched by surviving friends.

It is evident, from passages already quoted from the prophecies, that the Messiah was expected to be the teacher, not of the Jews only, but of all mankind, and the greatest of teachers. The expectation of the Messiah existing at the appearance of Jesus displayed a feature corresponding to the prophecies in this respect. The woman at the well of Sychar said, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things."

The opinion of a great multitude of modern writers concerning Jesus corresponds to the prophecies as fully as did the expectation of the woman at the well.

To show the exalted character expected in the Messiah, and found in Jesus, I will compare a few words from the Old Testament with a few words from Rénan's *Life of Jesus* and

other modern writings. The list of quotations may be made short, because of those already made in the second chapter for a somewhat different purpose. In the quoted passages it will be apparent that Jesus is looked upon as the world's great religious teacher. A single passage from the Old Testament, taken as a specimen, will show the conception of an exalted and quite extraordinary character, which constitutes a conspicuous feature of the prophecies concerning the Messiah. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

In his first chapter Rénan says, in substance, that the religious revolution inaugurated by Jesus is the capital event in the history of the world. This first chapter, after stating that expectation was at this time at its height in Judea, closes with these words: "These aspirations, incessantly trampled down by a hateful reality, at length found their interpreter in the incomparable man to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of Son of God, and that with justice, since he caused religion to take a step in advance



incomparably greater than any other in the past, and probably than any yet to come." Commenting on the conversation at Jacob's Well, he says: "On the day when he pronounced these words he was indeed the Son of God. He for the first time gave utterance to the idea upon which shall rest the edifice of the everlasting religion. He founded the pure worship, of no age, of no clime, which shall be that of all lofty souls to the end of time. Not only was his religion, that day, the benign religion of humanity, but it was the absolute religion; and if other planets have inhabitants endowed with reason and morality their religion can not be different from that which Jesus proclaimed at Jacob's Well." In the seventeenth chapter he says, "Each of us owes him the best that is in himself." In an apostrophe which follows the account of the crucifixion he says: "For thousands of years the world will depend on thee! Banner of our contests, thou shalt be the standard about which the hottest battle will be given. A thousand times more alive, a thousand times more beloved, since thy death than during thy passage here below, thou shalt become the corner-

stone of humanity so entirely that to tear thy name from this world would be to rend it to its foundations. Between thee and God there will no longer be any distinction." From the concluding chapter, entitled, "Essential Character of the Work of Jesus," I will select a few expressions. "The foundation of the true religion is indeed his work. After him, there is nothing more but to develop and fructify." "Jesus will remain in religion the creator of its pure sentiment; the Sermon on the Mount will never be surpassed. No revolution will lead us not to join in religion the grand intellectual and moral line at the head of which beams the name of Jesus. In this sense we are Christians, even though we separate upon almost all points from the Christian tradition which has preceded us." "This sublime person, who each day still presides over the destinies of the world, we may call divine, not in the sense that Jesus absorbed all divinity or was equal to it (to employ the scholastic expression), but in this sense that Jesus is that individual who has caused his species to make the greatest advance towards the divine. Humanity as a whole presents an

assemblage of beings, low, selfish, superior to the animal only in this that their selfishness is more premeditated. But, in the midst of this uniform vulgarity, pillars rise towards heaven and attest a more noble destiny. Jesus is the highest of these pillars which show to man whence he came and whither he should tend. In him is condensed all that is good and lofty in our nature." The closing words of the book are: "But whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

Though Strauss is much more reserved than Rénan in the expression of his admiration, his conception of Jesus is far from being the conception of an ordinary person. His conception of Jesus is that of a real and very extraordinary character, whose career constitutes the nucleus of a cloud of myths which have gathered about it.

After inquiring what Jesus may have gained

from the various sects of his day, and finding in these contrasts rather than resemblances to his teachings, Strauss says: "If we suppose him to have been indebted to the Essenes, to the Alexandrians, and to every school and doctrine ever known, for his opinions, still we can not find in any thing that could thus have been imparted to him, any thing which can be imagined sufficient to lead to a revolution in the world: the cause of this grand work could only be found in the depths of his own soul."

The following extracts from the writings of J. Stuart Mill are made by President W. D. Killen, of the Presbyterian College of Belfast, in an article in *Princeton Review*:

"About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which . . . must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission, who ever

existed upon earth, religion can not be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." "It remains a possibility that Christ actually was what he supposed himself to be— . . . a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue."

Passages displaying a high appreciation of the character and work of Jesus, and giving him in fact the first position among religious teachers, are not found in the works of quite late writers merely; but Christian writers of an earlier day were able to collect similar passages from writers like Rousseau. In fact, in any age when the character and work of Jesus have been carefully and candidly studied, they have called forth expressions of high appreciation.

The prophets in pointing their readers forward to the Messiah, and the writers just

quoted in pointing theirs backward to Jesus, alike point to a conspicuous figure in the religious world rising abruptly from the ordinary level of intervening characters as a volcanic peak may in some generally level region be seen in the distance to rear its head a thousand feet above the gently undulating surface of the surrounding country.

An imbecile can not assume the part of a man of sense. No more can an ordinary man apply to himself the extraordinary language of the prophecies. And yet in the light of what has been written by Strauss, Rénan, Mill, and Parker, those assumptions of superiority which must needs have been made to meet the requirements of the prophecies, and which would have made an ordinary man ridiculous, appear to rest like a crown of glory on the brow of Jesus.

In a sense which is very important to the modern inquirer Strauss, Rénan, and perhaps all who have given serious attention to the subject, believe that Jesus was born of the right lineage, at the right time, and in the right place to meet the requirements of the prophecies—so born as to profit by their exist-

ence. The probabilities are strongly against the thought that a pretender, or any other than the true Messiah, happening to be born of the right lineage, happening to be born at the right time, happening to be born at the right place, happened also to possess these transcendent powers. The improbability appears still more glaring when it is remembered that this fortunate pretender must also be looked upon as falling heir to the fruits of that great scheme by which idolatry was eliminated, and heir to the fruits of that other and parallel scheme by which the expectation of the Messiah had been established, and that so, by mere good fortune, all things necessary for the accomplishment of his mission and the gratification of his ambition were at hand.

The prophets having attributed to the Messiah this exalted and very extraordinary character as the teacher of all mankind, there was, to state the case moderately, not more than one chance in ten that any religious teacher would appear, so notably in advance of others as to fulfill their predictions; and yet Jesus, who claimed to be the Messiah, did, according to the estimate of these writers, occupy this

eminent position as the world's religious teacher, has for eighteen centuries continued to hold it without successful competition, and was the founder of that religion which is adapted to the wants of all mankind.\*

The character and work of Jesus having so fully met the expectations of the prophets,

\* We give these estimated ratios in the form of a table:

The chances that no religious teacher would appear who would fulfill the exalted expectations of the prophets.....	9	The chance that a religious teacher would appear who would fulfill the exalted expectations of the prophets...	1
The chances that the religious teacher, having the required character to meet the expectations of the prophets, would not have appeared at a time so satisfactory that no trace of any discussion of this point should come down to us.....	2	The chance that the religious teacher, having the required character to meet the expectations of the prophets, would have appeared at a time so satisfactory that no trace of any discussion of this point should come down to us.....	1
The chances that the birth of this teacher would not coincide with the period of the peculiar state of society which existed at the time and place of Jesus, and that we should not be able to trace schemes by which this state of society was produced.....	9	The chance that the birth of this teacher would coincide with the period of the peculiar state of society which existed at the time and place of Jesus, and that we should be able to trace schemes by which this state of society was produced.	1
The chances that this teacher, if found at all, would be found outside of Palestine.....	50	The chance that this teacher, if found at all, would be found in Palestine.....	1
The chances that this teacher, if found at all, would not be found in the tribe of Judah....	50	The chance that this teacher, if found at all, would be found in the tribe of Judah.....	1
Multiplying, $50 \times 50 \times 9 \times 2 \times 9 =$	405,000.	Multiplying here, as before, the result is only 1.	



let us inquire what other points in regard to him appear to be established.

If a religious teacher having the required character could have been expected, there was not more than one chance in three that the time of his appearing would so accord with the expectations of men familiar with the idioms of the prophecies that no trace of any discussion upon this point should come down to us; and yet the New Testament, which appears to give with entire freedom the discussion of many points, and the presentation of many objections, brings us no trace of any discussion upon this point. I think it not amiss, therefore, to place this moderate ratio in the table.

The peculiar state of society at the time and place of Jesus, with reference to idolatry and the expectation of the Messiah, has been dwelt upon at some length. The chance that the birth of the world's religious teacher would coincide with the period at which this state of things existed, and that we should also be able to trace the outlines of carefully devised and laboriously worked schemes by which this preparation of soil was effected, is

certainly not greater than one in ten. I do not, therefore, hesitate to place this ratio in the table. Though not a matter of prophecy, this coincidence was among the good hits which made the fortune of Jesus, if he was not the true Messiah.

If a career of such pre-eminence as to correspond with the prophecies has been found in the annals of any tract of country, in what tract was it probably found? According to the writers I have quoted, a career of such pre-eminence is found only in the annals of a little province lying at the east end of the Mediterranean Sea; but the chances are equally favorable in any tract, of equal area, lying in those portions of the world in which the same enlightenment exists, or has existed, with as great displays of genius—wherever artists, writers, statesmen, inventors, scientists, or other men of eminence have appeared. Why should not the world's religious teacher have appeared in Egypt, Greece, or Rome? Why not in Germany, France, or England? Nor should we pass slightly by New England, with her transcendentalism, her Radical Club, and her Free Religious Association; and if there is a

prophet nearer home he shall not in this instance be without honor in his own country. Great is Chicago, with her Philosophical Association! Why should not the world's religious teacher have appeared in Chicago? And if not in Chicago, then why not in Illinois? In the throwing of these dice all these enlightened regions seem to have been so loaded as to fall wrong side up. While Strauss, Rénan, Mill, and the New England radicals discourse of the pre-eminent teacher, the little province at the east end of the Mediterranean alone stands before us.

I shall not, I think, be understood to express surprise that a Jew, in predicting the birthplace of the great teacher of mankind, on whose law the inhabitants of the isles should wait, should fix on some point in Palestine. A Jew would certainly fix upon a point in that region if he should fix upon any. The point I wish to illustrate is the very great probability that, having fixed the birthplace of the great teacher in Palestine, the Jew would be wrong; because of the greater probability that the great teacher, if he should appear at all, would appear in some part of

those great tracts of enlightenment which include Greece, Rome, Phœnicia, Egypt, Germany, France, England, all of Western Europe, and the United States and Canada.

The wonder is that modern writers, in pointing out "the incomparable man to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of Son of God, and that with justice, since he caused religion to take a step in advance incomparably greater than any other in the past, and probably than any yet to come," also fix our attention on Palestine.

Among historians of the Roman Empire and writers of the life of Christ there is no question as to the region in which Christianity originated, and in which the career of Jesus was witnessed; but the description given by Rénan of the effect produced by an examination of that region is so graphic as to furnish a temptation to introduce it. "I have," says he, "traveled through the evangelical province in every direction; I have visited Jerusalem, Hebron, and Samaria; scarcely any locality important in the history of Jesus has escaped me. All this history, which at a distance seems floating in the clouds of an unreal

world, thus assumed a body, a solidity, which astonished me. The striking accord of the texts and the places, the wonderful harmony of the evangelical ideal with the landscape which served as its setting, were to me as a revelation. I had before my eyes a fifth Gospel, torn but still legible, and henceforth, through the narratives of Matthew and Mark, instead of an abstract being which one would say had never existed, I saw a wonderful human form live and move."

The prophecy of Micah was mentioned in an earlier chapter, with the remark that it definitely fixed the place at which the Messiah should appear. I will here add that the reference to the Messiah is equally certain; for the language is like that in which the expected Messiah is usually mentioned in the prophecies, and is applicable to no one else. I will merely quote it, without farther comment: "Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

If I may represent the little region in which it is quite certain that Jesus was born, in which he died, and in which all his life

was passed, by a target used in artillery practice, and the little town, whether it be Bethlehem or Nazareth, at which Jesus was in reality born, by a small circle drawn on the target, I shall say that Micah saw that small circle on the target, at a distance represented by seven centuries, and carefully aimed a shot at it. Matthew and Luke, standing by the target, tell us that the ball struck the little spot inclosed in the circle. Strauss and Rénan, standing at a distance represented by eighteen centuries, doubt whether the shot was quite so successful; and especially they seem to see, from their stand-point, a little spot just outside the circle. It appears to them much more probable that the ball struck there. Whatever may be the truth in regard to this question, Strauss and Rénan are prepared to face the world with the assertion that the ball went crashing through the target. If Matthew and Luke are to be relied upon, the aim was entirely accurate; if Strauss and Rénan are our witnesses, the aim was taken by a gunner of no mean skill.

On a map representing the north temperate zone one may shade the region which in-

cludes every locality mentioned in the life of Jesus; and with a pencil of another color he may shade all those regions which, so far as human sagacity can determine, would, at some time since the prophecies were written, have been as likely to produce the extraordinary teacher described in the passages quoted as the region shaded at first. He will then see that the contrast between the two shadings as to extent of territory covered is very great. While the one covers an area not much greater than the smallest of the States of this Union, the other covers important portions of great continents. He will see that if the prophet varied from absolute accuracy, which can not be proved, his variation was confined within certain limits which are quite narrow. The smaller area represents the chances that modern observation would confirm the statements of Matthew and Luke to the extent to which we find those statements confirmed. The larger area represents the chances that modern observation would not confirm the statements of Matthew and Luke to the extent to which we find those statements confirmed. If the larger area is fifty times as large as the

smaller, then there are fifty chances that a teacher whose description meets the requirements of the prophecies, as that of Jesus does, would be found outside of Palestine to one that he would be found in it.

The lineage of Jesus is claimed to accord throughout with the requirements of the prophecies. Strauss laboriously argues, and Rénan firmly asserts, that Jesus was not, probably, of the family of David. Let this stand with the question as to whether Jesus was born at Bethlehem or at Nazareth. It is a point on which the evangelists have made statements which we can neither positively verify nor deny. That Jesus was of the race of Shem, of the descendants of Abraham, and of the tribe of Judah, is not questioned.

If a career of such pre-eminence as to meet the requirements of the prophecies has been found, in what tribe of men was it probably found? According to the writers quoted the only career of such pre-eminence is the career of a man who was certainly a descendant of Abraham, and in all probability of the tribe of Judah; but there have certainly been a hundred other tribes or races of men, whether



their genealogies have been kept or not, which, so far as human sagacity can determine, were as likely to produce that pre-eminent career as the tribe of Judah. That the estimate may be moderate we shall say that there have been fifty such tribes or races of men. The probability being as great that this pre-eminent career would be found in any one of the others as in the tribe of Judah, there are fifty chances that that career would be found in some other race to one that it would be found in the tribe of Judah.

Using, for the present, the estimates which have been made as we have passed along, the chances that the claim of Jesus to the Messiahship would not be confirmed by modern observation and study, to the extent to which we find it confirmed, are 405,000, to 1 that it would be so confirmed.

No other man so largely dependent upon good fortune for the gratification of his ambition was ever so successful. If the native powers of Jesus had not been altogether pre-eminent, his claim to the Messiahship would have been altogether futile; having those powers, if his birth had not been at a time that

accorded with the interpretation given by his countrymen to the prophecies, his aspirations would have been greatly embarrassed; if he had not been born at the period of the peculiar state of society which existed in his day, he could not have performed a work which would have met the expectations of the prophets in regard to the results of the Messiah's mission; if he had not been born in Palestine even his disciples could not have claimed that he was born in Bethlehem; if he had belonged to any other tribe or race of men than the tribe of Judah, of the descendants of Abraham, the prophecies in regard to those descendants, and that tribe would have been an impassable barrier to his claim; besides, even his disciples could not have claimed that he belonged to the family of David.

In arguments upon moral questions figures should be looked upon as means of suggestion and illustration rather than means of proof. I do not expect others to adopt the exact figures I have placed in the table; I merely hope that when those who study the subject shall have made their own estimates, and worked the problem for themselves, they will

reach the conclusion stated in an earlier chapter: In adopting that view of the life of Jesus and the origin of Christianity of which Rénan is a prominent representative, and which is largely held by those who reject the supernatural, enough must be attributed to good fortune to outrage our ideas of probability, and to render that view quite untenable.

Either Jesus was not the incomparable man (Rénan), in the depths of whose own soul the cause of this grand work could only be found (Strauss); the greatest moral reformer, and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth (Mill); the way, the truth, and the life (Parker); the greatest of the purely spiritual teachers of the past (*Toledo Index*), whose leadership is the noblest of all leaderships (Colonel Higginson), who did all that it was possible for any soul to do at one epoch (Professor Everett), and who answers to our needs because he is too deep for us (Alcott), or he is very Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of men.\*

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\* In the second chapter admissions, or statements, in regard to the high character of Christ and Christianity are introduced to show that the claims of Chris-

Before leaving the subject I will add a few words concerning the line of argument that has been pursued. Though some statements may have been made which are at times questioned, the stress of the argument has been placed upon facts which one who has followed it could verify for himself, from his standpoint, and to a considerable extent upon facts which have been made conspicuous by writers who reject the supernatural.

On account of the deference for science,

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tianity are worthy of investigation. In the ninth chapter they are used to show the fulfillment of prophecy. In this note I shall be pleased to call attention to another fact made conspicuous by them, and of interest on account of its bearing on the probability of the truth of the New Testament writings—the message is worthy of the signs which are claimed to have accompanied it.

“A miracle may be defined to be a plain and manifest exercise by a man, or by God at the call of a man, of those powers which belong only to the Creator and Lord of nature; and this for the declared object of attesting that a divine mission is given to that man.” (Smith’s Bible Dictionary.)

As quoted in Alexander’s Evidences, Hume says: “Suppose all authors in all languages agree, that from the first of January, 1600, there was a total darkness all over the earth for eight days; suppose that the tradition of this event is still strong and lively among the

amounting to a mild superstition towards whatever bears that name, it will be appropriate to call attention to the use made of circumstantial evidences in the natural sciences. A few years ago Professor Huxley presented his view of the evidences in favor of evolution, in a course of three lectures, delivered in New York. As the nature of his discussion would take him, at the first step, quite beyond all human testimony, he introduces the following remarks:

“Evidence as to the occurrence of any fact

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people; that all travelers bring us accounts of the same tradition, etc. It is evident that our philosophers ought to receive it for certain.” If this should be presented as a miracle, the case would be quite different with our Christians. They would still look for some sense in the statement—some reason why the miracle was performed. The occurrence would be looked upon by them as a phenomenon of nature, unexplained as yet, but capable of explanation when the facts of force and matter shall be sufficiently understood.

Colonel Ingersoll calls for a miracle, and asserts his readiness to believe when one is seen. A Christian has no special interest in a “wonder,” or a strange event, severed from the message, and the circumstances which alone could give it the character of a miracle. A miracle, in his understanding of the term, could not occur without a new revelation. The fulfillment of prophecies contained in the Old and New Testaments may, however, be displayed to modern observation.

in past time is of one of two kinds, which for convenience' sake I will speak of on the one hand as testimonial evidence, and on the other hand as circumstantial evidence. By testimonial evidence I mean human testimony, either direct or indirect; and by circumstantial evidence I mean evidence which is not human testimony. Let me illustrate by a familiar case what I mean by these two kinds of evidence, and what is to be said respecting their value. Suppose that a man tells you that he saw a person strike another and kill him. That is testimonial evidence of the fact of murder. But it is possible to have circumstantial evidence of the fact of murder; that is to say, you may find a man dying with a wound upon his head having exactly the form and character of a wound which is made by an ax, and with due precaution you may conclude with the utmost certainty that the man has been murdered, and is dying in consequence of the violence inflicted by that implement. We are very much in the habit of considering circumstantial evidence as of less value than testimonial evidence. ' And it may be in many cases, where the circumstances are

not perfectly clear and perfectly intelligible, that it is a dangerous and uncertain kind of evidence. But it must not be forgotten that in many cases it is quite as good as testimonial evidence, and that in many cases it is a great deal better than testimonial evidence. For example, take the case I referred to just now. The circumstantial evidence is better and more convincing than the testimonial. For it is impossible, under the circumstances that I have mentioned, to suppose that the man had met his death from any cause but the violent blow of the ax, and circumstantial evidence of murder having been done in that case is as complete and as convincing as evidence can be; it is evidence which is open to no doubt and no falsification. But the testimony of a witness is open to multitudinous errors. He may have been actuated by malice; and it is possible, and constantly has happened, that even a number of persons have declared that a thing has happened in this or that or the other way, when a careful analysis of the circumstantial evidence has shown that it did not happen in that way, but in some other; which cases are clear ones of the value

of circumstantial evidence, and of the fact that it may be evidence of the highest weight and of the highest authority." After presenting the evidence he said: "That is what I mean, ladies and gentlemen, by demonstrative evidence of evolution. An inductive hypothesis is said to be demonstrated when the facts are shown to be in entire accord with it. If this is not scientific proof, there are no inductive conclusions which can be said to be scientifically proved, and the doctrine of evolution at the present time rests upon exactly as secure a foundation as the Copernican theory of the motions of the heavenly bodies. Its basis is of precisely the same character—the coincidence of the observed facts with theoretical requirements."

In proving an inductive hypothesis men point out an accumulation of facts which they find arranged as they might be expected if the hypothesis is true, as they could not be expected if the hypothesis is not true. According to this method the truth of Christianity has been considered in these chapters. Perhaps if Professor Huxley had collected the circumstantial evidences of Christianity as



industriously as he has collected those of evolution, he would have been as earnest an advocate of the one as he has been of the other.

Circumstantial evidence may be used to sustain an opinion, or hypothesis, concerning a matter entirely beyond the reach of human testimony, as in the case Professor Huxley had in hand, or it may be used as collateral support to testimonial evidence. In regard to the supernatural career of Jesus we have the statements of the New Testament writers. Having this direct testimony, it is important that we examine its quality; but here we reach a department of Christian evidences on which it has not been my purpose to enter. The quality of the testimony given by the early disciples is very ably discussed in the writings of Paley. It has been my purpose to lay down the subject at about the point where Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* and the *Horæ Paulinæ* take it up.

As all Christian evidences, except the bare statements of the New Testament writers, are in some sense circumstantial, I will indicate the outlines of the two departments to which

I have referred, by alluding to an illustration that was used in introducing this discussion in the first chapter. The effort of Paley in the treatises just mentioned was chiefly to show that the early disciples in making their statements concerning a series of flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, spoke and acted, in very trying circumstances, like truthful men, and that the immediate effect of their statements was such as might be expected, if they spoke the truth, but not otherwise. The effort in these chapters has been to show that the moisture-bearing wind, the sultry air, and the gathering clouds which precede a shower, and the moist condition of the ground, the swollen streams and freshened fields seen after a shower, have been discovered in this case.

In the conclusion to the Evidences of Christianity, Paley, in a few comprehensive paragraphs, states the leading facts in the history of the establishment of Christianity, which constitute a foundation for our faith. On these he remarks: "No man can say that this all together is not a body of strong historical evidence." No more truthful remark was ever

made. I will venture the additional remark, that, no man can say that the facts which are found to accompany this historical evidence, sustaining the relation of circumstantial evidences, do not powerfully re-enforce it.

THE END.

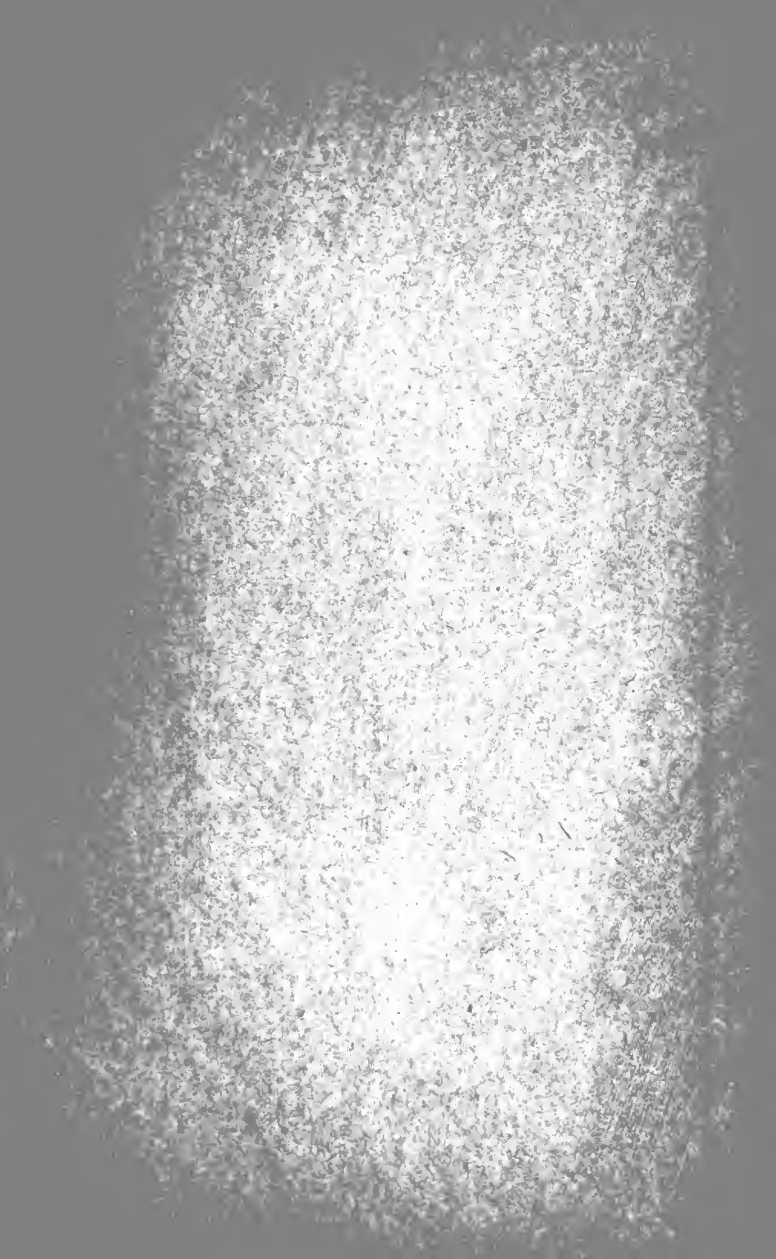




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